ENTERTAINMENT / F6

Current revival of Carlos Bulosan-based play triumphs in NY

NEWS/A10

UP to honor 24 distinguished alumni June 23

NEWS/A13

Senate oldies grouse over casual wear of young Turks

NEWS / A24

Back to zero for Marcos victims: House fails to pass P10-B compensation bill

SPORTS / A32

LeBron James brings show to NBA's biggest stage today

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Friday, June 8, 2007 ★★ 10 sections / Vol. 22 / No. 180 P18 website: www.inquirer.net

Senate Cavaliers bloc to rival Wednesday Group

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

A NEW BLOC CALLED the Cavaliers Group is being formed in the Senate, not to root for the Cleveland Cavaliers, which last week reached the NBA finals for

SENATE/ A13

Pinoy delivers Harvard Law graduation speech

By Volt Contreras

THIS YEAR'S ELITE, MULTIRACIAL CLASS OF Harvard law graduates may have found their best speaker in a young Filipino lawyer of Chinese descent, one obviously honed for the global stage but who hopes to pay back "the nameless farmers and fishermen" who partly paid for his studies.

PINOY/ A21

GMA: Let's reconcile, move nation forward

At House centennial rites, JDV bats for Cha-cha

By Michael Lim Ubac, Norman Bordadora and Christian V. Esguerra

SAYING IT WAS "ALL FOR one and one for all," President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday again called for national reconciliation and urged both her political allies and foes to move forward from the "contentious" May polls.

"We close the chapter of electoral battles and open the chapter of national consolidation and solidarity," the President said in her speech during the special plenary session of the House of Representatives, which was celebrating its centennial.

"We are glad that the electoral process is over and most of the winners proclaimed. We call upon the nation to close the contest of the ballot and step up the contest of excellence in all fields, all for one and one for all," she said.

As in the earlier sessions of the House this week, attendance was a problem and no quorum was mustered.

Speaker Jose de Venecia had to cut short a seven-page speech because he had to prepare for a gala dinner at the Manila Hotel.

Minority Leader Francis Escudero, who was among the six Genuine Opposition candidates proclaimed senator on Wednesday night, adjourned the session.

In his closing remarks, De Venecia cited the passage of the Expanded Value-Added Tax (EVAT) Law and the junking of the two

GMA: LET'S/ A21

SOMBER MOOD: Direct from a 25-hour trip to China, President Arroyo goes to the House of Representatives to keynote its 100th year anniversary special session hosted by Speaker Jose de Venecia. In his speech, De Venecia makes a pitch for the parliamentary system to remedy "our endemic political infirmities—the worst of them being the periodic gridlocks caused by the rivalries among the branches of government." LYN RILLON

Isafp chief to CHR: Will attend if I'm available ...

By Christine O. Avendaño and Inquirer Mindanao

SO SORRY, BUT I'LL SEE YOU when I see you.

This in effect was the message of the chief of the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (Isafp) to the Commission on Human Rights (CHR) which is looking into the forced disappearance of Jonas Burgos, the activist-son of the late press freedom icon Jose "Joe" Burgos.

The CHR had expressed annoyance over Maj. Gen. Delfin Bangit's continued failure to appear at its inquiry, and said it would summon him—for the third time—to its next hearing.

Bangit said he wrote to the CHR yesterday, apologizing for his "legitimate" absences and assuring it of his support in the investigation.

Burgos, 37, was abducted from a Quezon City mall on April 28 and has been missing since.

"It was never my intention to be absent [from the CHR hearings]," Bangit told reporters in Jolo, Sulu, where he joined the party of AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon Jr. in witnessing US Embassy officials turn over cash rewards to informants who helped bring down two top Abu Sayyaf leaders.

ISAFP/ A21

GMA wants RP to be part of China's dev't plan

By Nikko Dizon

CHONGQING, CHINA (VIA PLDT)—Rounding up her 25-hour business trip to southwest China, President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday said her visit here highlighted the eagerness of the Philippines to be part of China's development strategy.

In a speech at the 2007 China (Chongqing)-Philippines Trade and Investment Forum, Ms Arroyo said her country wanted to establish deeper ties with the world's largest city through increased trade, investment, services and tourism.

"As the only state-level municipality in central and western China, Chongqing is an ideal city to develop the Philippines' engagement with China's 'western development strategy' ... In accordance with that strategy, we Filipinos want to expand and deepen our relationships not only in the coastal areas but also in the central and western part of China, and that is why we are here today," she said.

Under the strategy, Chongqing is undertaking projects like the development of the Three Gorges reservoir area and has assumed the role of an important link between East and West.

Ms Arroyo took note of the filling of the Three Gorges Dam in 2008, a year earlier than the targeted 2009 completion date, which would make Chongqing

GMA WANTS/ A12

Textbook authors in awe of Marcos

By Antonio Calipjo Go
Contributor

HISTORICAL DISTORTIONS AND MISrepresentations are far and away the most lethal and destructive of all textbook errors because they spread in the minds of schoolchildren who are in their formative years the viruses of doubt and confusion, bias and prejudice, and hatred.

"Marangal na Filipino" for Grade 5—written by Grace Estela Mateo, Ph.D.; Lydia Agno, Ed. D.; Celinia Balonso, Ph.D.; Rosita Tadena, Ph.D., and Mary Dorothy Jose, M.A.—is one of seven new Social Studies textbooks approved by the Department of Education for use in the public schools this year. While this book contains other errors, it is for distorting and misrepresenting historical events, particularly those having to do with [former President Ferdinand] Marcos, that I call this book to account.

COMMENTARY

The authors began and ended the chapter on "Programs of Government during Martial Law" practically head over heels in awe and reverence at what the strongman was then contemplating to do, in effect downplaying and whitewashing what had, in fact, been carried out: the abuses and excesses, the horrors and atrocities.

Because these statements are colored in

TEXTBOOK/ A22

US awards P460 million to 4 ex-Sayyaf members

By Christine O. Avendaño and Julie Alipala
Inquirer Mindanao

JOLO, SULU—FOUR BANDITS-turned-informants yesterday became instant millionaires after they received the $10-million (P460 million) reward put up by the US government for Abu Sayyaf leaders Khadaffy Janjalani and Abu Sulaiman.

US Ambassador Kristie Kenney handed over a black briefcase containing crisp P1,000 bills to each of the four men who wore black hoods and jackets to conceal their identities. Calling the four informants "heroes," she urged other citizens to help the authorities track down other terrorists.

It was the largest reward paid out so far by Washington in its campaign to wipe out the Abu Sayyaf bandits in the western part of Mindanao, where the US military has been training and advising Filipino troops.

"I'm proud to give $10 million to brave citizens and I'm proud to give another $10 million to other citizens who would step forward to make more of us safe," Kenney said during a brief ceremony at the Hall of Justice at the provincial capitol complex here.

The money represented only part of the entire reward. The rest of the money, converted into Philippine pesos, was expected to be given to the four informants after the ceremony, US Embassy spokesperson Matthew Lussenhop said.

The US government offered a reward of $5 million for Janjalani, the Abu Sayyaf chieftain who was killed in

US AWARDS/ A22

INSTANT MILLIONAIRES: US Ambassador Kristie Kenney (beside AFP Chief of Staff Esperon) hands over "Rewards for Justice" in cash to one of four informers. EDWIN BACASMAS

Palace cancels bid results for P1.3B in textbooks

By Michael Lim Ubac

WHERE THERE'S SMOKE, THERE'S FIRE.

Thus did Education Secretary Jesli Lapus himself point to serious problems plaguing his department, including the existence of a group of suppliers allegedly cornering huge textbook contracts.

"I'm not going to categorically say that there's a cartel. But obviously there's a lot of smoke, [so] there's probably a fire," Lapus said, lamenting that much had to be done to address the dismal state of Philippine education.

The INQUIRER has learned that Malacañang had ordered the Department of Education to cancel the result of the bidding on May 28 for the latest textbook project worth P1.3 billion. However, Lapus said yesterday he had yet to receive a directive from President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Lapus, a former banker and congressional leader who assumed office only in August last year, told the INQUIRER by phone that he could not just "cleanse" the biggest department in the Arroyo administration "overnight."

"I can't do it right off. If there is such a cartel, maybe it has been here for decades now. But there must be a complaint supported by evidence. I can't just ban suppliers without the benefit of investigation and due process. They don't

PALACE/ A22

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Mindanao will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will have partly cloudy to cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms mostly in the afternoon or evening.

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Partly Cloudy
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Partly Cloudy
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

COMPILED BY: KATE PEDROSO, INQUIRER RESEARCH/06/07/07 SOURCE: PAGASA

Quorum lack kills cheap meds bill

By Christian V. Esguerra

THE PERSISTENT LACK OF A QUORUM DURING the last three session days of the 13th Congress has scuttled the passage in the House of Representatives of a bill seeking to bring down drastically the cost of medicines in the country.

But the problem was not just with quorums, said House Representatives Janette Garin and Ferjenel Biron of Iloilo, two vocal proponents of the proposed Cheaper Medicines Act of 2007, or HB 6035.

The two said that the senators, particularly Sen. Mar Roxas II, were against the House bill which they said would dismantle the supposed "drug cartel" in the country.

They said Roxas had come up with a seemingly populist bill that actually protected the interests of the giant pharmaceutical companies.

"If he wants to be President, he should pay the price," Biron told a press conference late Wednesday.

No scapegoat

Roxas yesterday countered that the Senate "cannot be made a scapegoat for any failure to pass this bill because we have been simply waiting since Monday for the House version to be passed on third reading."

"Right now, the bill on affordable medicines is comatose and only immense political will emanating from the House of Representatives can bring it to life," he said.

"It's not true that the quorum is the only problem, the Senate doesn't want the House bill," said Garin.

The Senate earlier passed the Roxas-authored Senate Bill 2263, but the House preferred to come up with its own supposedly "stronger" version.

Thus, HB 6035 which incorporated key provisions from HB 3830, an earlier bill that never got past the committee level. The bill needs to pass the House on third reading so it can be consolidated with the Senate version.

But it failed to pass the bill on Monday for lack of quorum, and again on Tuesday and Wednesday.

Groups lobbying for the passage of HB 6035, including senior citizens in the gallery, were hoping that the lower chamber could still do the job yesterday, but the session is supposed to be for the launching of the House centennial celebrations.

'Useless' bill

Garin described Roxas' bill as "useless," as it would cover only five percent of the drug market.

An amendment to the patent law, the Roxas bill provides for the parallel importation by government of cheaper brands of medicines that are exorbitantly priced in the Philippines.

By contrast, the House version would allow importation of these medicines by the private sector, forcing big pharmaceutical companies into an open-market competition, said Garin.

A key provision of the bill requires equal display of drugs imported by the old players and those entering the country through parallel importation.

By allowing parallel importation for both private and public sectors, the bill would cover 85 to 90 percent of the drug market, said Garin.

Garin projects a price reduction of at least 60 percent if the House bill passes.

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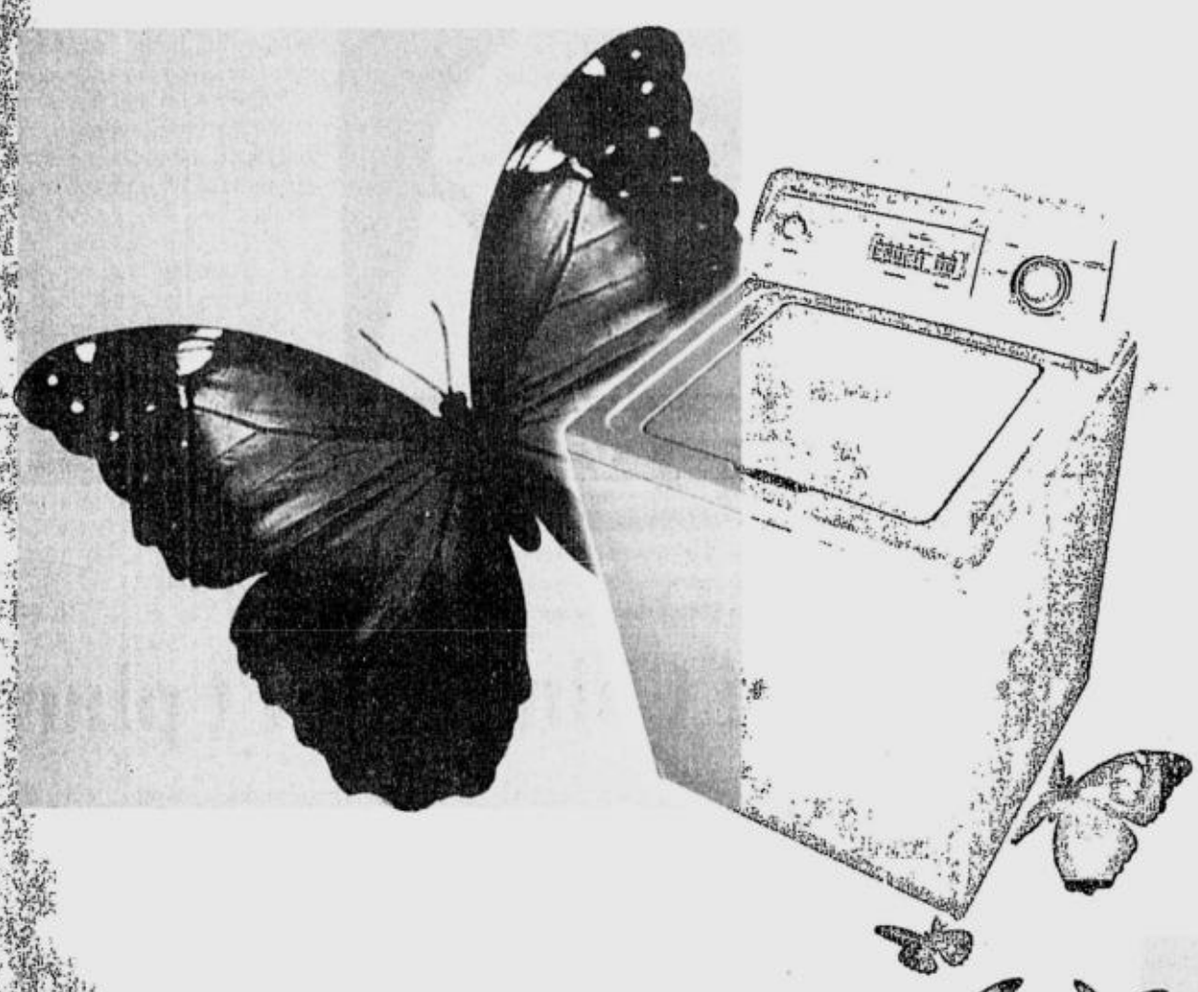

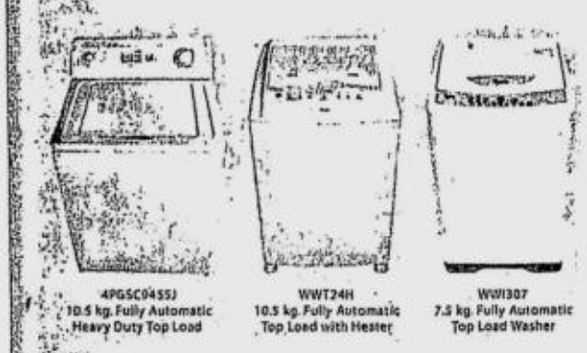

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Prosecution of PCGG men in Philcomsat board sought

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

A SENATE COMMITTEE HAS RECOMMENDED to President Macapagal-Arroyo that the Philippine Communications Satellite Corp. (Philcomsat) group of companies be taken out of the hands of the Presidential Commission on Good Government (PCGG), the agency tasked with the recovery of ill-gotten assets of the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos and his associates.

It also recommended that the PCGG's nominees—Enrique Locsin, Manuel Andal, Julio Jalandoni and Guy de Leon—be prosecuted for allegedly turning the country's pioneering satellite company into their "personal cash cows."

Sen. Richard Gordon, chair of the Senate committee on government corporations and public enterprises, said the committee has also recommended that the PCGG be put to task not only for its "gross mismanagement and lack of accountability" for Philcomsat, the Philippine Overseas Telecommunications Corp. (POTC), and Philcomsat Holdings Corp. (PHC) but for all the other sequestered companies that it has allegedly managed without transparency and accountability.

"As the PCGG has been in existence for over 20 years, the committee takes the position that it is time for the PCGG to be put to task and to be required to render a detailed accounting to the people concerning its accomplishments. How many illegal and anomalous transactions had the PCGG or its nominees done hidden under the protection of unconstitutional mantle of immunity? It is clear that there is an urgent need to revisit the PCGG and put an end to all such fraud, abuse and wastage," said Gordon.

Mismanagement

In a 20-page report covering the 11 public hearings that it conducted over the past 13 months, the committee said "it found overwhelming mismanagement by the PCGG and its nominees at the POTC, Philcomsat and PHC resulting in the deterioration of the financial condition of these corporations."

It cited the "soaring operating expenses of PHC, generous compensation packages for government nominees, the PHC advances to its affiliates beyond the reach of PCGG comptrollers, and the existence of suspicious bank accounts."

The committee cited the sharp rise in PHC expenses from P36.913 million in 2003 to P133.679 million in 2005 that were bloated by excessive representation expenses, professional fees, utility bills, and advances to affiliates.

In its recommendation, the committee said the government should take direct control of the Philcomsat shares from PCGG since these shares have already been deemed as belonging to the government and not under sequestration.

The committee also recommended the prosecution of the PCGG nominees and officials by the Office of the Ombudsman, Anti-Money Laundering Council and the Bureau of Internal Revenue.

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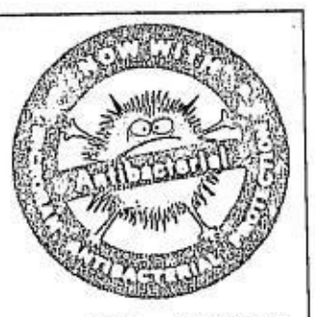

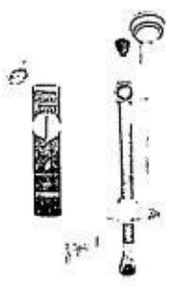

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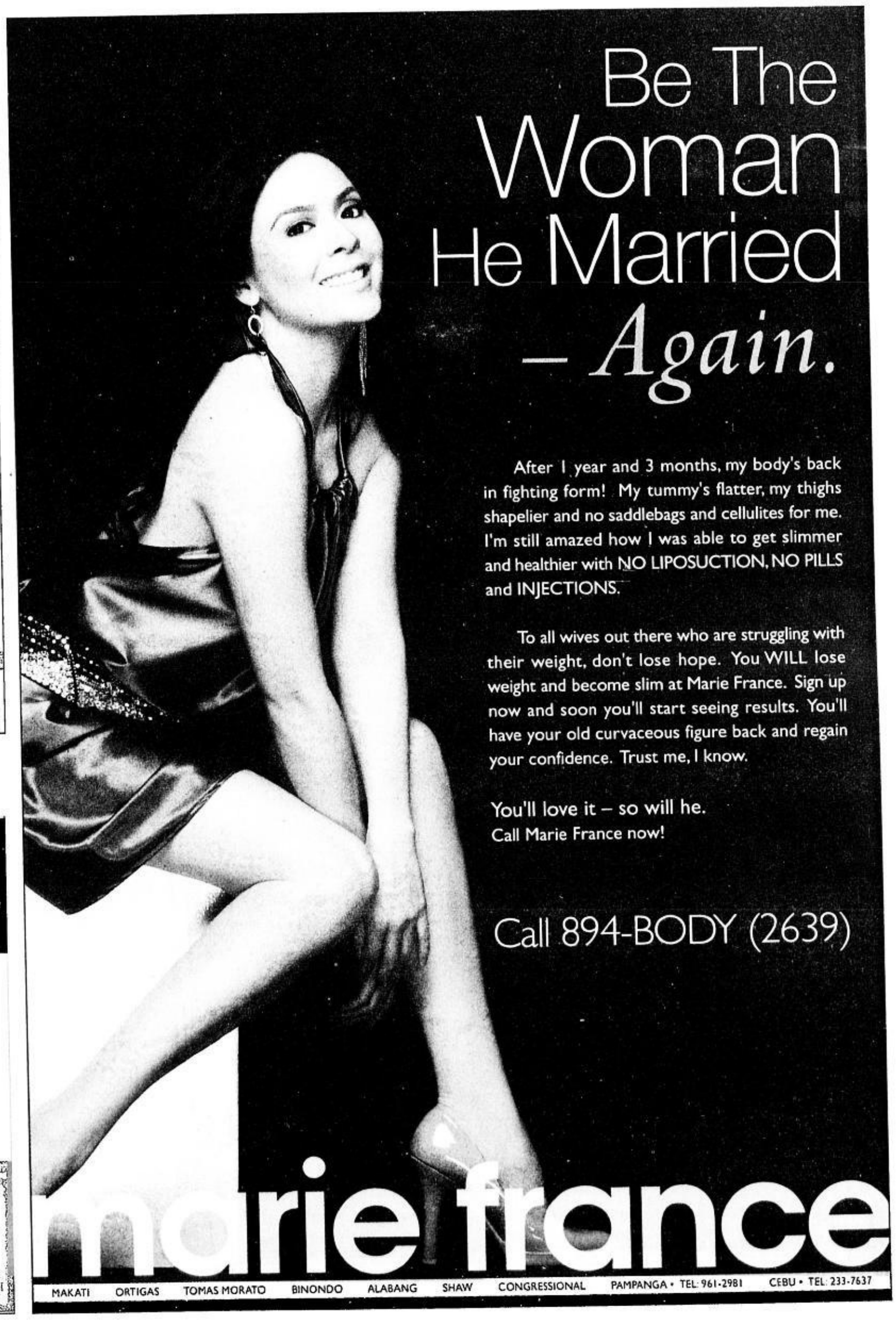

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Trillanes seeks release to attend proclamation

Let Comelec announce it first, says RTC

By DJ Yap and Leila B. Salaverria

HE HAS YET TO BE DECLARED A WINNER but detained senatorial candidate Antonio Trillanes IV already wants to be let out of jail for his proclamation.

Trillanes' lawyer Reynaldo Robles yesterday petitioned the Makati Regional Trial Court to grant the Navy lieutenant, who is being detained on coup charges, immediate leave when the Commission of Elections calls for him to be proclaimed.

Judge Oscar Pimentel immediately shot down the motion, saying the Comelec should first declare Trillanes' victory.

"Let the Comelec announce it first," he told Robles.

Robles argued that Trillanes might not have the time to file a motion for leave as the proclamation of winning candidates often follows the announcement of the winners.

The prosecution panel said Robles' motion was "speculative," but said they would pose no objection.

Assistant Chief State Prosecutor Richard Fadullon said the decision not to oppose the detainee's attending the proclamation was because of the lack of time for full legal proceedings.

However, Trillanes' physical appearance at Senate sessions would be a different matter, he said.

Robles said his client was virtually assured of victory as "his lead over the next two opponents is insurmountable." The latest Comelec tally puts Trillanes at 11th place.

The lawyer said Trillanes—who is charged as one of the ring leaders of the failed July 2003 coup, also known as the Oakwood mutiny—was studying a proposal to file a motion for him to be placed under the custody of the Senate.

At the same time, Robles said Trillanes would not use his being senator, if he wins, as a ticket to get out of detention.

He said Trillanes was agreeable to holding office inside his cell at the Philippine Marine Brigade at Fort Bonifacio in Taguig.

Fadullon said the title of "senator" does not mean Trillanes should be given special treatment.

"There cannot be any special arrangement or any special privilege granted to him simply because his stature has changed," Fadullon told reporters, adding that Trillanes should have thought about how he would fulfill his duties as senator before he ran.

He said the detained would-be senator will have to get a court order every time he wants to attend a Senate session, and each furlough would have to be subject to several conditions.

Fadullon said he disagreed with the sentiment that a Trillanes victory was a vindication of his past actions.

TRILLANES: Motion is "speculative"
EDWIN BACASMAS

"I don't think it is an affirmation that what happened last July 27, 2003 was a correct solution or a correct methodology of how to air one's grievances. I think he has learned that also," he said.

Being elected to a Senate seat does not erase past sins, he said.

Fadullon said Trillanes' membership in the Senate, assuming he wins, would not affect his court case. He also cannot use it to seek bail.

"We are here not to prosecute him for his political ambitions, we're here because of what happened on July 27, 2003, which is to prosecute him and his companions for coup d'etat. We will pursue it in the same relentless fashion as we did before. Nothing changes," he said.

Pimentel threw out an earlier bail application of Trillanes for lack of merit.

In his bail application, Trillanes, who is running under the Genuine Opposition ticket, cited some of the same grounds used by another detained senatorial candidate Gregorio Honasan, who was granted bail.

He said the complaint against him "failed to allege who the leaders of the supposed coup d'etat were."

As a mere "participant" in the failed coup, he argued that he was not facing a capital offense, and therefore, should be entitled bail.

But the court said that it "individually and categorically found strong evidence that accused Trillanes, Capt. Milo Maestrocampo and Capt. Gerardo Gambala were the leaders of the coup."

Magdalo officer affirms 'guilty' plea in coup case

By DJ Yap

ONE OF THE JUNIOR officers involved in the 2003 Oakwood mutiny took the witness stand yesterday to affirm that his decision to change his "not guilty" plea to guilty to conspiracy to commit coup d'etat was made of his own volition.

First Lt. Lawrence San Juan, in reply to questioning by Judge Oscar Pimentel of Makati Regional Trial Court Branch 148, said: "I believe I committed [the crime of] conspiracy to commit coup d'etat."

Pimentel had called the hearing to determine San Juan's "voluntariness" in changing his plea.

San Juan said he arrived at his decision while in solitary confinement after he was recaptured last year following his escape from Fort Bonifacio with several fellow rebel officers.

"I know I'm implicating others with my decision to plead guilty," San Juan told Pimentel.

Theodore Te, the lawyer of three of San Juan's coaccused, who used to represent the officer, asked San Juan if he was aware his conviction would result in his detention in a civilian prison.

"Yes, I'm aware of that," San Juan replied.

San Juan admitted he did not consult Te about his decision, saying he was sure the lawyer, whose other clients would be affected by his change of plea, would try to discourage him.

SAN JUAN: "Guilty plea on his own volition"
AP

Earlier, San Juan had asked the court to allow him to change his plea of "not guilty" to committing coup d'etat—a graver offense punishable by life imprisonment—to "guilty" to a conspiracy to commit coup d'etat which carries a prison term of six to 12 years.

But lawyer Rene Saguisag, who represents another of San Juan's coaccused, said it made no sense for San Juan to plead guilty to a conspiracy since there was a strong possibility the case would be dismissed.

"There was no coup d'etat; it was peaceful and no one was hurt. Their [rebel officers'] statements were part of free speech," Saguisag said, referring to the takeover by the junior officers and their men of the Oakwood apartment-hotel in Makati in July 2003 to protest corruption in government and the military establishment.

Te also questioned San Juan's plea change, since the officer's new lawyer, Jean Paolo Primavera, had told his client the prosecution did not have sufficient evidence to convict him.

"It is not logical and reasonable for a coaccused, in the face of lack of evidence, to plead guilty to a lesser offense when there is a 50-percent chance he would be acquitted," Te had told the court in an earlier hearing.

Pimentel gave Te and the other parties 10 days to submit their comments to San Juan's plea change.

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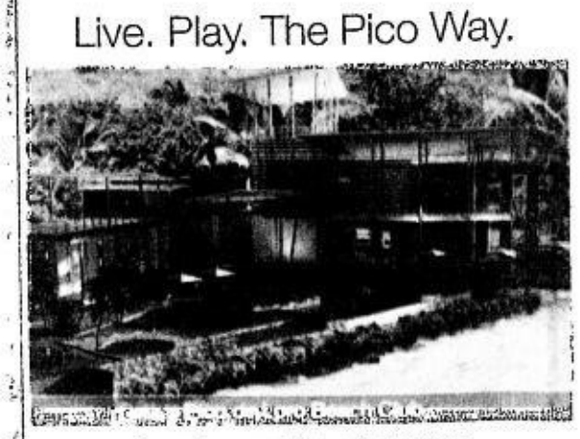

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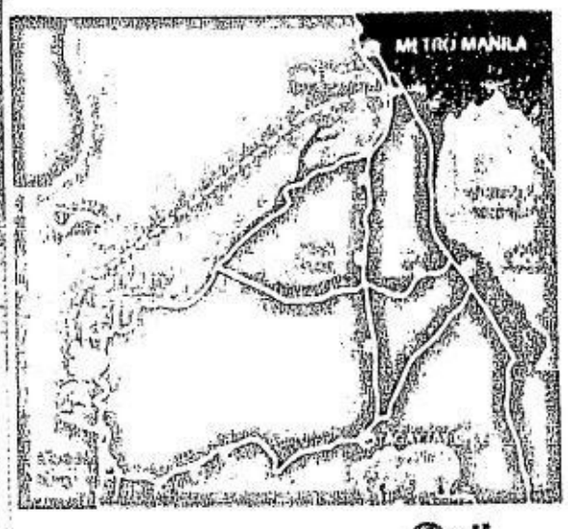

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'TECHNICALLY SPEAKING'

Failure of elections in Maguindanao not yet final

By Jerome Aning

THE FORMAL DECLARATION OF A FAILURE of elections in Maguindanao will depend whether the winning local officials there can prove that elections really did take place in the province, according to the Commission on Elections.

Comelec spokesperson James Jimenez said that, technically speaking, the Comelec has not declared a failure of elections in Maguindanao. The poll body has called a hearing on Monday on the matter.

Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos's announcement of the failure of elections in Maguindanao should be treated as a "prima facie assumption," Jimenez clarified, adding that the whole issue should be settled by Monday.

"The hearing will be for the purpose of determining whether or not [Abalos'] presumption is valid or not," he said.

"We think that if we don't give people the chance to [give their] input on this decision, then the more Comelec will be attacked if we just to do this unilaterally," he said.

The Commission en banc late Wednesday ordered all winning local officials in Maguindanao to present proof on or before June 11 that elections were indeed held in the province and that they were duly elected and proclaimed.

Overturning Abalos

The order, according to Jimenez, was in response to the recommendation of the special board of canvassers for Maguindanao that it could not go on with the canvassing of senatorial results because it failed to receive any certificates of canvass from the province's municipalities.

"The board ruled that it received no COCs from which to base the canvass for Maguindanao. The hearing on Monday will determine whether or not there was sufficient basis to overturn that," he said.

ABALOS INQUIRER PHOTO

Jimenez, however, supported Abalos' contention that it was possible elections had failed in Maguindanao.

"Technically, what happened is that no COCs were delivered. The first thing that it would suggest to you is that no elections took place," he said.

"The only thing that Comelec can take as proof is the COC because this is the document generated by the election. If you don't have a COC, then there's no election," he said.

Jimenez said the declaration of failure of elections and scheduling of special elections in Maguindanao may cover the entire province or only certain towns.

'Show us the document'

"It's for [the local officials] to show us whether or not elections took place. If they say they were proclaimed, then what's the basis of the proclamation? Show us the document," he said.

Maguindanao, which has 337,044 registered voters, could be a determining factor in the 11th and 12th placers in the Senate race.

Abalos said the proclamation of the two remaining senatorial winners would take place after the COCs from Maguindanao and three other provinces are canvassed.

Genuine Opposition lawyer Sixto Brillantes condemned the Comelec's reported declaration of failure of elections in Maguindanao, saying such a pronouncement would be illegal because no one petitioned for it.

Abalos set June 20 as the date of the special elections for the province. He added that because the municipal certificates of canvass (COCs) and statements of votes (SOVs) from all 22 towns of Maguindanao were missing, the Comelec was beginning to believe GO allegations that no elections took place there.

Highly improbable

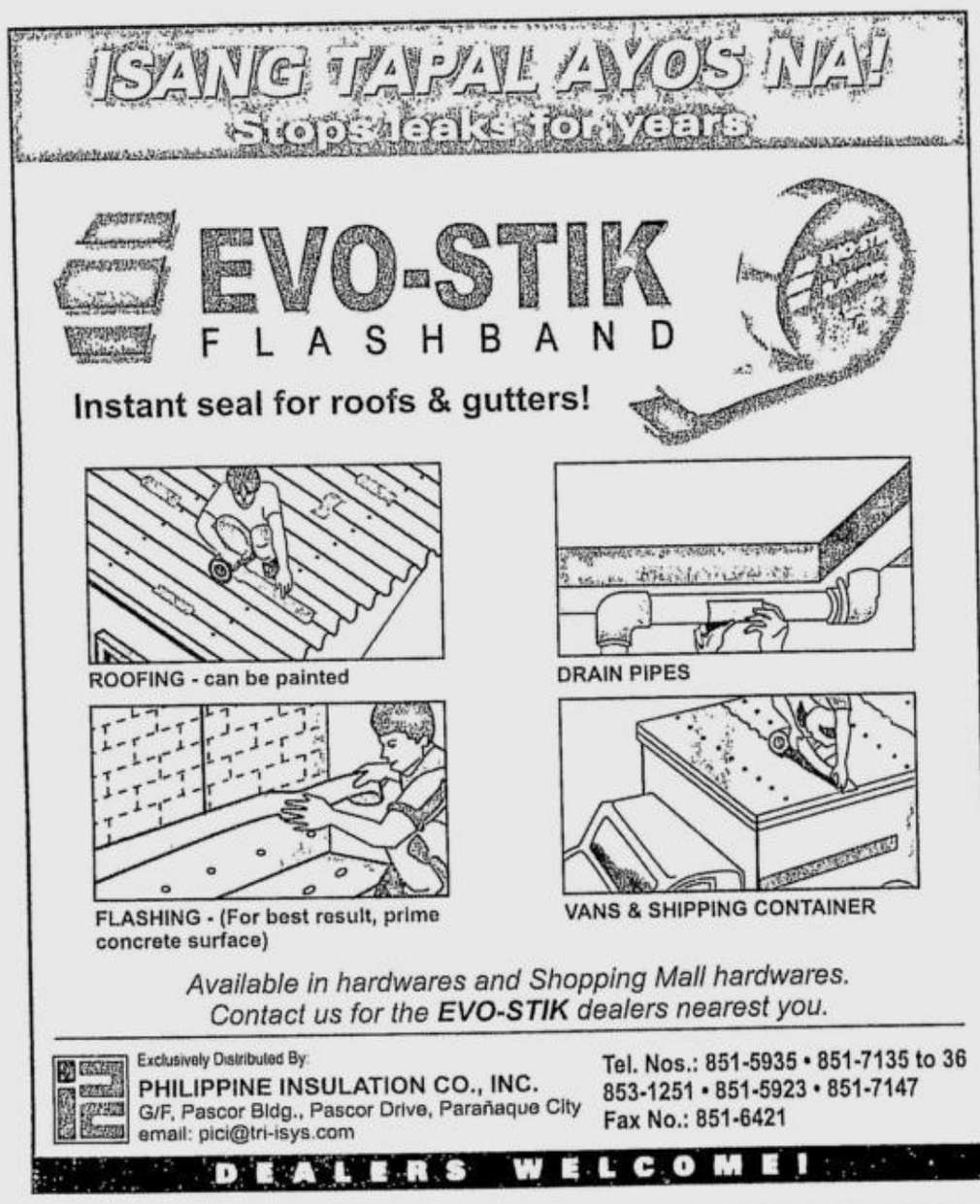
He earlier agreed that the case of 19 nonadministration senatorial candidates having zero votes from all the 22 towns was highly improbable.

Brillantes said the Comelec should follow its own procedures in declaring election failure and special polls.

"We will go to the Supreme Court if Comelec calls for special elections. Comelec can't call one on its own since no petition for failure of elections was ever filed. Our move is not to call for special elections for now," Brillantes told reporters.

Brilliantes said he believes the 12th placer in the senatorial count, GO's Aquilino Pimentel III, would still win if special elections are held.

Team Unity counsel Romulo Macalintal said the party would have no objection to the special elections and would rely on the Comelec's discretion.



'INTERNAL MATTER'

Buhay urged to settle row

By Jerome Aning

THE COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS yesterday urged Buhay Hayaang Yumabong, which is currently at the top of the official count of party-list votes, to resolve internal differences itself and not wait for the poll body to decide which of the group's two different sets of nominees is entitled to sit in the House of Representatives.

"It should be an internal matter. It's the party-list organization that solves that," Comelec spokesperson James Jimenez told reporters in a briefing.

Although Comelec has been asked by each of the feuding Buhay factions to deny due course to the other side's certificates of nomination, Jimenez said Comelec was reluctant to step into the feud.

Buhay, identified with the influential Catholic charismatic group El Shaddai founded by Bro. Mike Velarde, is poised to win three seats in the House in accordance with the Constitution, once it is formalized that it topped the votes.

The group, however, had presented two slates of nominees to Comelec. One is led by Hans Christian Seneres, the party's acting president and secretary-general. The other was submitted by his predecessor Melquiades Robles, its slate led by Velarde's son, Rene.

Seneres said Robles could no longer participate in the group's affairs because the latter was appointed administrator of the Light Rail Transit Corp. He added that since government officials might not join political parties, Robles' term as president had also expired.

Robles contended that he could not be forced out of Buhay because he still had the right to join an association even if he were a government official.

Seneres, however, argued that as secretary-general and acting president, he had the sole authority to submit the nominations.

Jimenez said Buhay members should resolve the feud quickly so that Buhay nominees could take their seats in Congress by June 30 and participate in the election of the House speaker.

"It's all up to them, really. If they won't settle this among themselves, then their congressional seats will remain unoccupied until the dispute is settled," the spokesperson added.

Power woes bug Boracay resorts

By Leila B. Salaverria

BORACAY, AKLAN—TOURISM SECretary Joseph Ace Durano assured resort owners that he would look into the problem of fluctuating electricity in this tourist island during a visit to several hotels over the weekend.

The resort owners said the power problem has disrupted services and taken its toll on electricity equipment, according to Edwin Trompeta, the DOT director for Western Visayas.

The power distributor for the 1,032-hectare resort island is the Aklan Electric Cooperative, which obtains its supply from the National Power Corp., Trompeta said.

Trompeta said there was no dearth of electricity supply for Boracay island. He said the problem stems from the damage caused by a barge in February to the underwater cables carrying electricity to the island.

"There's no problem with the supply. It's the distribution that is causing the fluctuation," he told reporters over the weekend.

He said it would cost millions of pesos to repair the damage.

Even though many of the bigger establishments have their own generators, there is concern that the brownouts would damage electrical equipment, said Trompeta. They could also lead to spoilage of food supplies, especially for smaller establishments that do not have generators, he added.

Annabelle Wisniewski, president of the HSAI Raintree Management Co. that runs the Discovery Shores in Boracay, said the hotel has taken to using its generators in the evening even if there is no brownout, to make sure its guests would get uninterrupted electric service.

Trompeta said the electricity demand in Boracay has naturally increased with the growing number of tourists visiting the island.

A report on the BCCI website said the island's daily electricity demand is about 7.5 megawatts.

Before resorts and other establishments started mushrooming in Boracay, the demand was about three to four megawatts, said Trompeta.

According to DOT statistics, 234,491 foreign and local tourists visited Boracay in the first four months of 2007, a four percent increase from the same period last year.

April saw the highest number of foreign and local visitors this year, with 93,615.

Some 73,104 foreign tourists came to the island in the first four months of the year, a 40 percent increase against the figure for the same period last year.

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SENATE HONORS: The three Filipina climbers receive their commendation from Senate President Manny Villar.

Saly Ilustre Sanchez; 61

RIZALINDA "SALY" ILUSTRE SANCHEZ DIED on June 6 at her residence in Chrysanthemum Village in San Pedro, Laguna, after a lingering illness. She was 61.

Saly was chief accountant at the Jose Cojuangco and Sons Organization, where she worked for over 30 years.

She was actively involved in church volunteer work all her life, and was the founder of the Legion of Mary chapter in Chrysanthemum Village and San Pedro's first curia president.

Her body lies at the mortuary of the Mother of Good Counsel Parish Church in Chrysanthemum Village (take Southwoods and exit from South expressway). Interment is set on Sunday after a 7 a.m. Mass.

Saly is survived by her son Norman Sanchez, daughter-in-law Ann, granddaughter Fiona Louise, and siblings Andy, Ofelia Silang, Francisco Jr. and Jennie.

Senate honors 3 Pinay climbers for Everest feat

THE SENATE HAS COMMENDED THE three Filipinas who made it to the summit of Mount Everest and became the first women to traverse the world's highest mountain from the Tibetan side (North) to Nepal (South).

The chamber awarded a resolution to Noelle Wenceslao, Carina Dayondon, Janet Belarmino and the Kaya ng Pinay Everest Team as a commendation to their courage and determination exemplified in their successful climb last month.

Senate President Manny Villar said, "We celebrate and take pride in the audacity of our women who have conquered Mount Everest, marking another milestone in our accomplishments as a country."

"Their feat clearly demonstrates the outstanding skill and strength of our Filipino women in the face of the fiercest adversities as they reach their goal. It upholds the importance of women empowerment in our country, further elevating the distinct qualities of our women," Villar said.

Villar authored Senate Resolution No. 629 giving recognition to the women climbers and their team.

DFA confirms kidnap, release of 2 RP seamen

By Cynthia D. Balana

THE TWO FILIPINO SEAMEN WHO WERE abducted on June 3 and released the same day in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria, returned to the Philippines three days later, the Department of Foreign Affairs said yesterday.

DFA spokesperson Claro Cristobal said the seamen were "repatriated to the Philippines and reunited with their respective families on Wednesday."

Cristobal said that Foreign Undersecretary for Migrant Affairs Esteban Conejos, who was in Nigeria, confirmed the abduction and the subsequent rescue of the two crew members of MV Seacor. Conejos did not identify the victims.

The two seamen were kidnapped by gunmen while "on social timeout" but were rescued by the Nigerian police four hours later, Cristobal said.

"Undersecretary Conejos expressed the gratitude of the Philippine government to the Nigerian government for the rescue," he said.

The kidnapping and the subsequent rescue of the seamen was first reported on Monday but the DFA could not immediately confirm it.

Last month, eight Filipinos who were kidnapped along with Korean workers were also released by their kidnappers after the Nigerian government negotiated for their safe release.

Nigerian militants, who claimed to be fighting for a larger share of the country's oil resources for local people, and a number of armed gangs out to make ransom money continued to terrorize foreign workers in the African country.

The vast majority of kidnapped victims have been released unharmed. There was a lull in kidnappings during the Nigerian elections recently but the armed groups have made up for lost time, seizing at least 48 foreigners since May 1.

Cristobal said the Philippine government's travel ban to Nigeria stands because of the incidents of kidnapping in the oil-rich country.

Conejos said the DFA was prepared to extend assistance to overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) currently in Nigeria who may wish to avail themselves of the ongoing repatriation program.

According to Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo, the series of kidnappings of foreign workers, particularly Filipinos, underlines the perilous situation that confronts Filipino workers in some countries.

"It is for their own interest, therefore, that we ask our (OFWs) to respect the deployment ban and abide by the restrictions on travel to Nigeria, as well as Iraq, Afghanistan and Lebanon," Romulo said.

Sandigan acquits late PNP chief of graft

By Volt Contreras

THE SANDIGANBAYAN HAS ACQUITTED TOP former government officials including then chief of the Philippine National Police, the late Cesar Nazareno, in a graft case involving a P168-million fire truck deal in 1991.

The antigraft court's fifth division said it found no basis for allegations that the 65 Nikki-Hino trucks purchased by the PNP under Nazareno's watch were overpriced.

Also cleared were former Local Government Secretary Luis T. Santos, former PNP Logistics Support Command Director Nicasio Custodio and bids and awards committee members Reynaldo Osia, Obedia Espeña and Juhan Kairan.

The court said the prosecution failed to show conspiracy on the part of Nazareno and the others, who were also accused of favoring Taihei Company of Japan in awarding the purchase contract.

Graft investigators suspected overpricing upon finding that the government paid P2.86 million for each fire truck.

The court, however, said it was convinced by evidence proffered by Nazareno's defense team showing that the Nikki-Hino fire trucks were superior to those offered by VG Roxas Enterprises, which put in a lower bid of P1.72 million per truck.

The decision, penned by Associate Justice Teresite Diaz-Baldoz, was promulgated last week, seven months after Nazareno's death.

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ONE YEAR TO GO

CARP far from complete after 19 years, says NGO

By TJ Burgonio

WITH ONE YEAR TO GO BEFORE IT IS DUE TO expire, the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP) is far from meeting its target of redistributing 8-million hectares of land to the poor—and its extension hangs in the balance.

Three coalitions of nongovernment organizations advocating agrarian reform—Unorka, Peace and Parrds—came to this conclusion in their study: "19 Years of CARP: Gains, Reversals and Uncertainties."

Unorka is the Pambansang Ugnayan ng Nagsasariling Lokal na mga Samahang Mamamayan sa Kanayunan, Peace is the Philippine Ecumenical Action for Community Empowerment Foundation Network, while Parrds is the Partnership for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development Services.

CARP marks 19 years on Sunday with the program set to end in June 2008.

"At 19 years of CARP and with the threat of nonextension looming on the horizon, it is clear agrarian reform remains far from complete," the NGOs said in their study.

They said that based on government figures, more than 6.7-million hectares of private and public lands of the 8.06 million targeted for redistribution by 2008 had been given out to more than 4 million peasants.

Gov't data doubted

The NGOs doubted the government data, however, pointing out that some areas could not be covered by CARP due to the resistance of landlords and the presence of armed leftist guerrillas.

They also said the accomplishment report appeared to be bloated and that 600,000 hectares that were "newly discovered" for coverage were not new at all.

Fluctuations in the government CARP target ranging from 8 million to 9.1 million hectares could mean that targeted landholdings could be "arbitrarily removed" from coverage, they said.

"For these reasons, we do not believe the government's claim the land redistribution program is 85-percent complete," the NGOs said.

A more realistic number is 40-percent completion if the millions of hectares of private and public lands that "mysteriously disappeared" from the CARP scope were factored in, they said.

Success stories

Citing studies, Unorka, Peace and Parrds acknowledged that CARP had its major gains, like increasing farmers' incomes, hence, contributing to poverty alleviation in the countryside.

They said there were success stories, particularly in agrarian reform communities (ARCs) where land redistribution was complemented with a "more systematic delivery of support services."

The NGOs, however, said that only 1.069 million land reform beneficiaries had benefited from the establishment of ARCs, into which government support services are poured.

"To expand the number of beneficiaries, DAR must sustain and expand the coverage of ARCs nationwide. Support services must also reach upland communities," they said.

Despite these gains, the NGOs asserted that agrarian reform was "on the retreat" because of reversals in CARP implementation.

'Bankrupt model'

Among these were the reaffirmation of the exemption of livestock areas, the exemption of areas covered by pre-CARP zoning, and the continued implementation of anomalous mechanisms such as the stock distribution option (SDO) and leaseback based on voluntary land transfer or voluntary offer to sell.

The SDO at Hacienda Luisita, the sprawling sugar estate owned by the Cojuangco family in Tarlac, was proof of a "bankrupt corporate model" that allowed corporations to control the land, the NGOs said.

Romulo to meet Nokor counterpart

FOREIGN SECRETARY ALBERTO Romulo will meet his North Korean counterpart in a three-day visit to Pyongyang this month, a senior official at the Department of Foreign Affairs said yesterday.

Romulo, who is also current chair of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean), was due to meet Pak Ui Chun during his June 19-21 visit to Pyongyang.

Pak, named foreign minister in May, is due to attend the annual Asean Regional Forum (ARF), the only security mechanism in the Asia-Pacific region, on Aug. 2.

"We just want to have a conducive atmosphere of fruitful discussions on regional security and this engagement is a very important step," Erlinda Basilio, foreign affairs undersecretary for policy, told reporters on Thursday.

She said Romulo would brief Pak on developments in the Philippines and within Southeast Asia, making him familiar with the Asean processes.

During a visit to Tokyo late last month, President Macapagal-Arroyo offered to host informal six-party talks on North Korea on the sidelines of the ARF meetings in Manila because all six states involved in the dialogue would be present. *Reuters*

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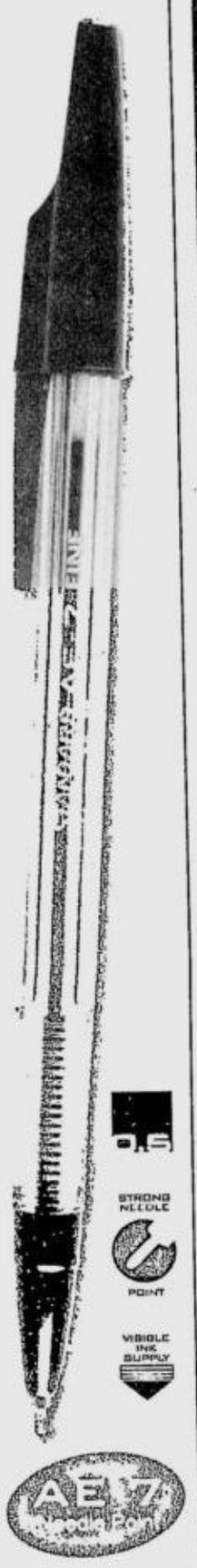

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9th Week in Ordinary Time

1st Reading: Tb 11:5-17
Gospel: Mark 12:35-37

As Jesus was teaching in the Temple, he said, "The teachers of the Law say that the Messiah is the son of David. How can that be? For David himself, inspired by the Holy Spirit declared: The Lord said to my Lord: sit at my right until I put your enemies under your feet. If David himself calls him Lord, in what way can he be his son?" Many people came to Jesus and listened to him gladly.

Commentary

Raphael, the healing angel, teaches Tobias how to heal his old father's eyes with the fish that they caught as they began their journey, so that he might see again. Tobit sees again and the family rejoices, blessing and praising God for his mercy. Do we bless God for being able to see, for having medicine and health care, for being able to alleviate others' pain? And do we make sure that everybody has what he or she needs when they are ill?

Jesus is questioned maliciously by everyone who comes. Now he asks a question using the scriptures, the Word of God, to illustrate what he is saying-about himself, David and the messiah. How can the messiah be both David's son and Lord? The crowd listens with delight as Jesus trumps the teachers/lawyers and scribes who have been harassing him with the intent of tripping him down. Do we read the scriptures in such a way that the Word calls us to repentance and deeper insight or do we use the Word against others?

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Opposition solons study next moves

By Norman Bordadora

FACED WITH THE POSSIBILITY OF BEING led by a member of the majority coalition, the opposition in the House of Representatives are exploring other options on how it would position itself in the fight for the Speakership in the 14th Congress.

Speaker Jose de Venecia of the Lakas-CMD and Rep. Pablo Garcia of the Kabalikat ng Mamayang Pilipino (Kampi), both allied in the majority coalition, are the main contenders for the post.

According to House rules, the second placer in the speakership fight automatically becomes the minority leader.

Lawyer Rufus Rodriguez, representative-elect of Cagayan de Oro City, said opposition members who met last Wednesday agreed to keep their options open on whether to align with either candidate of the majority coalition or choose one from among their ranks.

Rodriguez said there was no way the opposition can finish second in the speakership race considering the administration numbers in the House.

True opposition

"There were those who raised the possibility of aligning the true opposition in the House to members of the majority who have already expressed the intention to become Speaker. They said that the interests of the minority may be further pursued [with such an alignment]," Rodriguez said.

"It was agreed that we will keep our options open, explore possibilities and come up with more discussions before the speakership elections in July," he added.

The Liberal Party, the dominant minority party, through its president Sen. Franklin Drilon and national executive council member Quezon Rep. Lorenzo Tañada III, has already expressed support for Garcia.

Rodriguez said he objected to the idea of opposition members allying themselves as a group to one speakership bet from the administration.

"Our voice will only be overwhelmed by their number. How can either Lakas or Kampi be the voice of the opposition?" he said.

Rodriguez, a member of deposed President Joseph Estrada's Puwersa ng Masang Pilipino, said the opposition members collectively "condemned" the rivalry between De Venecia and Garcia as an alleged ploy to wrest the minority leadership from the opposition.

Strengthen the minority

"It will be anomalous for a member of the administration coalition to represent the opposition as minority leader," Rodriguez said.

Rodriguez said it was agreed during the meeting that the opposition should consolidate its ranks and beef up its membership with independents and "disgruntled Lakas and Kampi members."

"It was agreed that we should strengthen the minority," Rodriguez said.

Both Lakas and Kampi support President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Lakas is claiming a House membership of more than 100 while Kampi has more than 50. The opposition in the incoming Congress numbers no more than 30.

Tañada earlier this week said the LP's 15 members were inclined to vote for Garcia.

"Garcia is more acceptable. For instance on the issue of [Charter change], he believes that it should be through a constitutional convention," he added.

Tañada said the LP's discussions with Garcia were conducted not through Kampi but through Garcia's local party, One Cebu.

"If there's a covenant that's going to be signed, it will be with One Cebu," he said.

"Pablo Garcia comes from the old school of Filipino politicians. For him, a principle is a principle and one should stand by it. He also understands the other parties' positions," he added.

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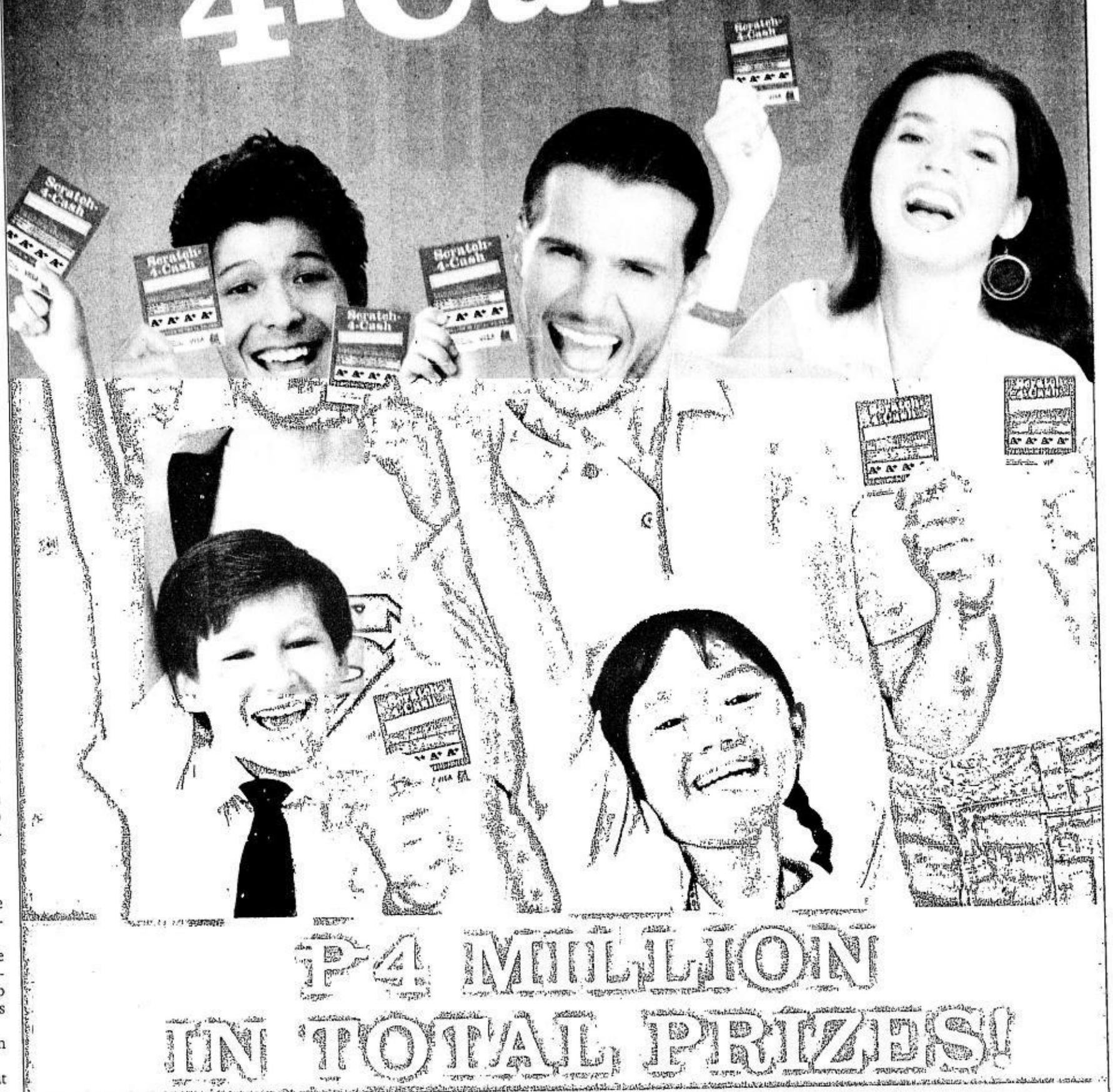

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UP to honor 24 distinguished alumni June 23

TWENTY-FOUR outstanding alumni of the University of the Philippines will be conferred awards in various categories by the UP Alumni Association during the 94th UP General Alumni-Faculty Homecoming and Reunion on June 23 at Ang Bahay ng Alumni in the Diliman campus at 3 p.m.

UPAA president Ponciano Rivera said this year's awardees are led by microfinance whiz Jaime Aristotle B. Alip, most distinguished alumnus; and Justice Ameurfina Melencio-Herrera and Dr. Gelia Tagumpay-Castillo as most distinguished alumnae. Justice Florentino P. Feliciano and Dr. Ester Albano-Garcia are 2007's Lifetime Distinguished Achievement Awardees.

Professionals

Outstanding Professional Awards will also be given to UP alumni who have excelled in their respective fields. They are: Leticia H. Tison, arts and letters; Tomas C. Banguis Jr., business administration (advertising); Yolanda Bello-Pajaro, business administration; Maryo J. de los Reyes, communication (film & audiovisual communication); Felix D. Librero, education; Aura Castillo-Matias, engineering and technology; Lenore Raquel Santos-Lim, fine arts; Belen O. Rillo, home economics (food science & technology); Ruben F. Balane, law; Romeo V. Fajardo, medicine (ophthalmology); Asuncion K. Raymundo, natural sciences-biology (microbiology); Carmelita A. Divinagracia, nursing; Ma. Lourdes Carlos-Fernando, public administration; and Virginia Alvarez-Miralao, social sciences.

Service awards

This year's recipients of the Community Service Awards are Rosa Samson-Pacubas for Luzon and Margarita de la Torre-de la Cruz for Visayas while human rights advocate Rep. Loretta Ann Pargas-Rosales is UPAA Presidential Awardee. Michael B. Gamalinda and Ms Mikaela Irene D. Fudolig, summa cum laude of UP Los Baños and UP Diliman, respectively, are the Outstanding 2007 Graduates.

All UP alumni are enjoined to attend the homecoming which will serve as the pre-Centennial tip-off point. The University of the Philippines celebrates its 100th anniversary next year.

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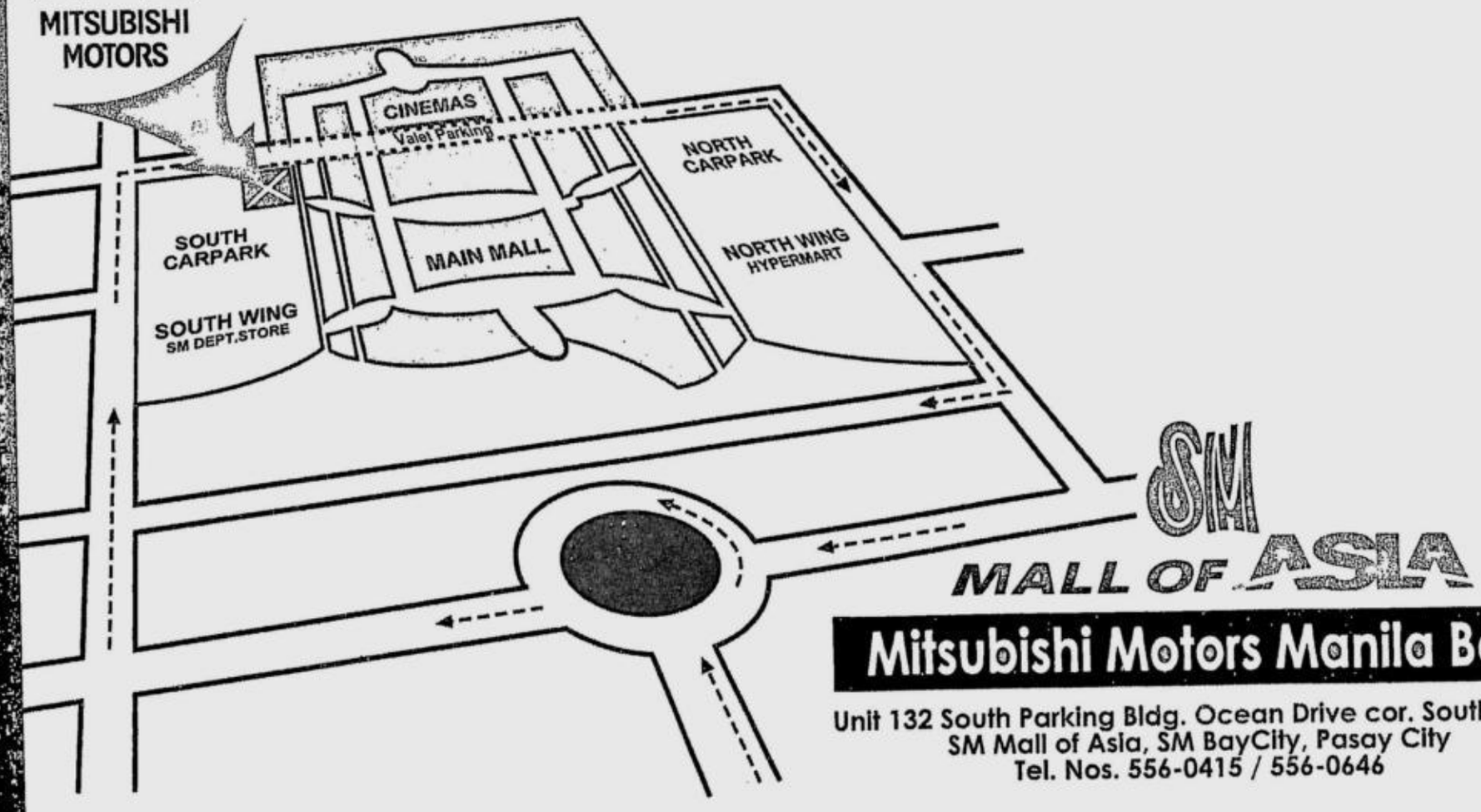

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Rising trade in human organs alarms int'l group

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

THE INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR Migration (IOM) yesterday expressed alarm over the rise in human trafficking for purposes of trade in internal organs and called for stronger cooperation between countries.

"There is a tremendous demand for organs in many countries. We would like it to go through legal channels but in many countries, demand outstrips the supply," IOM regional representative Bruce Reed said at a conference yesterday.

Reed said trafficking for organs was on the rise in China and in many impoverished states in Southeast Asia, like the Philippines, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Burma (Myanmar) and Vietnam.

He warned that while many victims were trafficked within Asia, "there is an increasing trend of intercontinental trafficking, in which victims are trafficked from Asia to Africa, Europe and America."

Third-largest criminal activity

Although rising, the number of those being trafficked for organs was still dwarfed by those being smuggled for sex, Reed said, because of the constant demand from the entertainment and hospitality industries.

He said human trafficking was the third-largest international criminal activity, behind drugs and arms smuggling.

"They (victims) sometimes end up in situations of forced begging, delinquency, adoption, false marriage or, most recently, as victims of the thriving trade in human organs," he said.

The selling of internal organs first caught the attention of Filipinos when stories of people selling their kidneys surfaced years ago.

"The causes of trafficking in the region are rooted in poverty, limited educational and employment opportunities, gender discrimination, social and political violence, prostitution, among other factors," he said.

Combat trafficking

Reed spoke at a four-hour forum to combat trafficking sponsored by the Swedish Embassy.

Swedish Ambassador against Trafficking in Human Beings Anders Oljelund said strict prohibitions against immigrants in many developed countries could be providing opportunities to traffickers.

He said immigration liberalization was being discussed in many European countries, but he was quick to add that this would have limitations.

Reed said globalization had increased the number of people who travel, raising the risk of persons falling prey to traffickers.

Protect the victims

"There is clear need for making accessible more legal channels of migration in order to balance the demand for labor and services with the supply," Reed said.

He stressed the need for international cooperation to combat human trafficking. He said destination countries "must work to raise awareness and extend protection and assistance to victims," while source nations "must endeavor to prevent the problem and reintegrate victims."

Since traffickers are "often well-funded, politically connected and concealed behind a respectable exterior," he said victims need a lot of support not only so they could lead normal lives again, but also so that governments could run after the violators.

In Sweden, Oljelund said victims may be granted up to six months of stay provided that they cooperate with court proceedings against traffickers.

"We are studying ways to protect the witnesses," he said. *With a Reuters report*

2 teens die in Cebu landslide

By Nilda Gallo
Cebu Daily News

CEBU CITY—TWO teenagers were buried alive in a landslide early afternoon Thursday while cooking their meal beside Mangitngit Falls in the northern Cebu town of Carmen, some 40.85 kilometers from this city.

The police identified the fatalities as Christine Beduya and her cousin Genevive Beduya, both 18 years old and residents of nearby Danao City.

Their 13 companions, most of them also teenagers, were also hurt, according to Insp. Joel Abuan, acting Carmen police chief.

The falls is located within the resort being developed by Carmen Councilor Gerald Villamor, son of Mayor Virginio Villamor Jr., in Sitio Mangitngit, Barangay Lower Natinawan, Carmen.

Resort caretaker Feliciana Escoton said the teenagers were swimming in the river near the falls and decided to prepare their lunch at about 2 p.m.

The Beduya cousins were cooking beside the falls when a portion of the mountain slid quickly down on them.

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Office of the President of the Philippines Malacañang
The adoption 30 years ago of Protocols I and II relating to the protection of victims of international and non-international armed conflicts, respectively, underscored the various States' maturity in dealing with victims of armed conflicts, whether waged within their own borders or abroad. The Republic of the Philippines, which has always been at the forefront in the promotion and implementation of international humanitarian law (IHL), joins the whole of humanity in commemorating and celebrating the Protocols' 30th anniversary, as it reaffirms its adherence to IHL by upholding the universally applicable and accepted principles embodied in these protocols calling for an enhanced protection of victims of armed conflicts.
EDUARDO R. ERMITA
Executive Secretary

IHL National Committee
The Additional Protocols were an important development 30 years ago to fill up gaps to protect civilians from the effects of armed conflicts that evolved after World War 2. This is especially so where non-international armed conflicts have emerged and common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions was insufficient. We are pleased to note that the Philippines has ratified Protocol 2 in 1986 and we believe Protocol 1 is forthcoming in the priority treaties of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Office of the President for endorsement to the Senate. Its ratification will be symbolic of our dedication and commitment to humanity.
Justice Leonor Ines Luciano
Chairperson

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GMA wants RP to be part of China's dev't plan

From page A1

"the home of China's primary inland waterway port."

"The Yangtze inland waterway will be able to accommodate ocean-going vessels as well. And, therefore, it is important for us Filipinos to be here even before that happens, so that we will be one of your first friends (here)," she said.

At the forum with Ms Arroyo were Trade Secretary Peter Favila and Chinese-Filipino businessmen led by Lucio Tan.

The businessmen had joined Ms Arroyo a day before at another business forum in Chengdu, the capital of Sichuan province, also in southwestern China.

Model of future China

The Chongqing forum was attended by the city's large entrepreneurs, business leaders and officials led by Mayor Wang Hongju, who took note in his opening remarks that The New York Times had described Chongqing as the "model of future China."

"Chongqing is a city of immense business opportunities. It is a city where you sow and you reap," Wang said of the metropolis that covers 82,000 square kilometers and has a population of 31.44 million.

Consulate

This month, Chongqing, known as the "Mountain City" because it is built on hilly land, celebrates its 10th year as a municipality directly under the central government following Beijing, Tianjing and Shanghai.

Like Chengdu's top official, Wang invited the Philippines to set up a consulate in Chongqing, a move that would strengthen diplomatic ties between Beijing and Manila.

Ms Arroyo herself pointed out that China and the Philippines continued to exchange high level visits that included her two state visits to Beijing and a number of business trips.

Although visibly tired from her two-week, six-nation swing, Ms Arroyo remained upbeat during her overnight business trip to this economically robust city.

She took note of the many "complementarities" between the Philippines and Chongqing that could be developed into a vibrant partnership in several industries.

Tricycle parts

She told the Chongqing business leaders that the tricycle, the three-wheeled mode of transportation of the Filipino working class and "an important small-scale enterprise for Filipinos," had parts and components imported from Chongqing.

Chongqing-based Zongshen Industrial Group, the No. 1 Chinese brand in the Philippine motorcycle market, is now investing in nickel mining and speedboat manufacturing in the Philippines, according to the President.

"It is said that nickel is to the Philippines what oil is to Saudi Arabia. We are happy that many Chinese companies, not only Zongshen that needs nickel for its motorcycles, are interested and negotiating to invest in the nickel sector of the Philippines," she said.

Direct flights

Ms Arroyo also said that among the business proposals discussed during her visit was the establishment of direct flights between the Philippines and Chongqing, which has a first-class international airport.

She said this could help develop a healthy tourism exchange in which Chongqing residents could enjoy the Philippines' famed white sand beaches while Filipinos could visit the mountain city and the scenic Three Gorges on the Yangtze River.

As in Chengdu, Ms Arroyo offered Philippine logistics services to Chongqing, the logistics hub in central and western China.

Tax breaks

At the forum, Favila said the Philippine government was offering Chongqing businessmen four to eight years of an income tax holiday (ITH), a special 5-percent tax on gross income after the ITH, a zero-percent duty on imported capital equipment, and an exemption from input value-added tax on allowable local purchase of goods and services.

For their part, Chinese-Filipino businessmen were eager to invest in Chongqing.

Ms Arroyo said the Henry Sy-owned SM was poised to build its third mall in China in Chongqing, after setting up stores in Fujian and Chengdu.

Tan's Allied Bank has a branch called Xinlian Shangye Bank at the Hilton Hotel here.

To complement Ms Arroyo's visit, Chongqing's Mayor Wang will lead a 200-member business, cultural, and science and technology delegation to Manila next month.

Putting emphasis on the Philippines' recent economic gains, the President said: "We are building Southeast Asia's next success story. We invite you, our friends in Chongqing, to be part of it."

Home after 5 days

Ms Arroyo returned home yesterday afternoon following a three-leg trip to Europe and China.

The Philippine Air Force Honor Guard gave Ms Arroyo foyer honors at the Kalayaan Hall of the Villamor Air Base upon emerging from the chartered Philippine Airlines Flight PR-001 at 2:30 p.m. yesterday, ahead of the original schedule of 3:20 p.m.

She had gone on a five-day trip to Italy, Portugal and China. Earlier, she traveled to Japan, Australia and New Zealand for the same mission. *With a report from Tarra Quismundo in Manila*

ARRIVAL HONORS: President Arroyo receives foyer ho at Villamor Air Base on Thursday. Ms Arroyo returned fr

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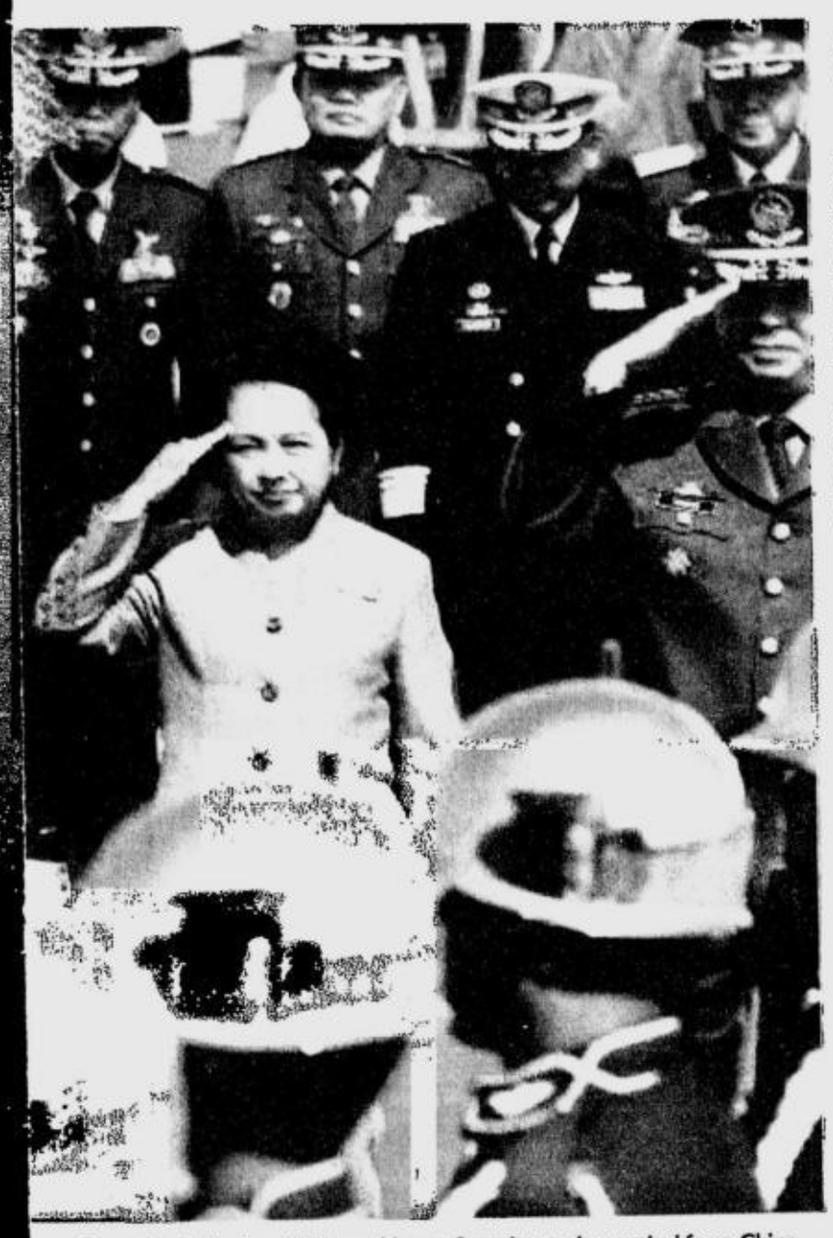

nors from the Philippine Air Force Honor Guard upon her arrival from China om a three-country tour—to Italy, Portugal and China in six days. JESS YUSON

Old guards vs young Turks in Senate

IN WHAT COULD BE A PREVIEW of a generational clash in the Senate, the old guards were already frowning at the brash antics of the incoming young Turks during Wednesday's proclamation of the 10 winning senators.

One of the Senate's septuagenarians, who requested anonymity, raised his eyebrows when three Generation X senators—Francis "Chiz" Escudero, Alan Peter Cayetano and Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III—came in comfortable, casual attire while the rest were in formal wear.

While the *barong Tagalog* or suit was the recommended but not the required attire, the senator said the three did not show any respect for the Senate tradition of showing up in the proper clothes for the proclamation.

"They should have completed their casual wardrobe by wearing rubber shoes," the senator said.

Proper decorum

The election's No. 2 vote-getter, Escudero, came in rolled-up plain white long-sleeved shirt and blue jeans while Aquino and Cayetano looked pedestrian in their loose shirts over casual slacks.

One of the Senate's two-termers also did not take too kindly to Cayetano's raising his fist when his name was called, saying it was not proper decorum in such a formal affair.

Although the freshman-senators were not obliged to stick to tradition, the two older senators agreed that they should have given respect to their office by wearing the proper attire.

The two senators also hoped that the three would be more circumspect in their decisions. *Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.*

Senate Cavaliers bloc to rival Wednesday Group

From page A1

the first time in its franchise history.

The bloc is to be composed of graduates of the Philippine Military Academy.

Reelected Sen. Panfilo "Ping" Lacson said that his *mistahs* in the Senate—Rodolfo Biazon, Gringo Honasan, and possibly Antonio Trillanes IV—would form the bloc, which could rival the Wednesday Group led by Senate President Manuel Villar.

Lacson, a former head of the Philippine National Police, and Honasan, a cashiered Army colonel, both graduated from the PMA in 1971.

Biazon, a former chief of staff of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, graduated in 1961. Trillanes, a Navy lieutenant detained for leading a coup attempt in 2003, graduated in 1995.

Same language

Trillanes stunned the nation for his phenomenal rise from No. 15 or No. 16 in SWS' last pre-election survey to land at No. 11 in the latest count of the Commission on Elections.

The Wednesday Group is composed of Villar, Francis Pangilinan and Joker Arroyo (one member, Ralph Recto, failed in his reelection bid), who belong to different parties but are bound by their common stand on issues in the Senate.

The group meets every Wednesday. A former member of the group is Vice President Noli de Castro.

Lacson said the Cavaliers Group would be formed based on the same idea that led to the setting up of the Wednesday Group.

"We speak the same language. We understand each other very well and our advocacies should not differ that much from each other. It's very easy for us to jell, the four of us," said Lacson.

Meetings in jail

He said he broached the plan to Trillanes during his visit to the latter's detention cell in Fort Bonifacio.

"We talked about the possibility of banding together to pursue common advocacies for the good of the Senate, for the institution, not to be obstructionist," Lacson said.

He hinted that the group might meet occasionally in Fort Bonifacio to accommodate Trillanes, who would not be allowed to attend Senate sessions unless he was granted bail.

Headed for showdown?

This early, the Cavaliers Group and Wednesday Group are headed for a showdown after Lacson had expressed interest in heading the blue ribbon committee currently chaired by Arroyo.

Lacson said he would push for the closure of cases left hanging by Arroyo's committee such as the "Hello Garci" scandal, the "Jose Pidal" account and the fertilizer fund scam.

Arroyo has denied sitting on the cases.

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The decider

EDITORIAL

INCREDIBLY, THE RACE FOR THE LAST SENATE seat may come down to Maguindanao Province, perhaps the best-documented of all fraud-marred areas during the last election. Only in the Philippines. And only under Benjamin Abalos.

According to the chair of the Commission on Elections, the Comelec is set to declare a failure of elections in the province, and already planning special elections tentatively scheduled on June 20.

Characteristically, Abalos drew inordinate attention in a radio interview to the personal sacrifice he and other election officials were prepared to endure just to make the special elections a reality. In other words, he whined. "Remember, Monday is a holiday. We don't mind working on a holiday. We will finish this on Monday so there will be special elections early," he said in a mix of English and Filipino.

Gee, thanks. If Abalos had only gotten it right the first time, there would have been no need for special elections in Maguindanao or Lanao del Sur at all. If Abalos had only been serious about poll automation, there would have been no need for him to work overtime; indeed, his job would have been done in a day. (Of course, if Abalos had only resigned after the Supreme Court found the Mega Pacific contract anomalous, he wouldn't have to worry about reporting for work at all.)

To be sure, we can understand the justification for special elections, and indeed sympathize with it: Democracy is founded on the electoral franchise. To invalidate the vote in Maguindanao would be to disenfranchise the province's 300,000-plus voters, at least as far as their choices for senator are concerned.

And yet: A belated decision to declare a failure of elections in Maguindanao, if the other commissioners side with Abalos, is legally infirm. Why? The province's local officials, from Maguindanao kingmaker Rep. Simeon Datumanong on down, have already been proclaimed.

Sen. Franklin Drilon, president of one wing of the dominant minority party, the Liberal Party, made the same case the other day. "Legally, the Comelec cannot declare a failure of elections for the senatorial candidates in Maguindanao because elections indeed took place as shown by the . . . proclamation of local Maguindanao candidates led by Congressman Datumanong and Governor Ampatuan," Drilon said.

Genuine Opposition lawyer Sixto Brillantes has also pointed out another legal defect of a declaration of failure of elections: "Can they call (special elections) motu propio (considering there was) no petition for failure of elections?"

And yet there it is: Abalos seems to have belatedly found justification for declaring a failure of elections.

His plan to conduct special elections in the province is also morally dubious. Why? Because Abalos has failed to determine what went wrong—and yet pledges to prevent a recurrence just the same.

He has acted sluggishly on the revelations made by teachers who witnessed election fraud.

He has acted all too slowly, as though struck dumb by incomprehension, on concerns that the "results" of the Senate vote in the province were statistically improbable: extremely high turnout rates, like "elections" in North Korea or Iraq under Saddam; a 12-0 sweep for the administration, a direct rejection of national trends.

He has acted glacially—or perhaps, more precisely, with icy indifference—in the matter of the accountability of election officers in the province.

No copies of the Certificates of Canvass were submitted to the Comelec by the Provincial Board of Canvassers. Isn't this prima facie evidence that the top election officers in the province were either corrupt or incompetent? Maguindanao election supervisor Lintang Bedol denied that a certain witness to election fraud had served as a poll clerk and therefore was in a position to observe electoral sleight of hand, only to be refuted later by direct proof. Isn't this prima facie evidence that Bedol was lying through his teeth?

Instead of cleaning his own house in Maguindanao, however, Abalos looks set to call for special elections. The people of the province, having been mugged once before, are being invited to yet another mugging. And the results of that crime will be used to choose the last of the winning candidates for the Senate.

Ah, yes. Another Abalos election.

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A postmortem on the senatorial polls

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

FIRST OFF, LET ME ADD MY CONGRATULATIONS to the 10 senatorial winners who were proclaimed by the Commission on Elections last Wednesday: Loren Legarda, Chiz Escudero, Ping Lacson, Manuel Villar, Kiko Pangilinan, Noynoy Aquino, Ed Angara, Alan Peter Cayetano, Joker Arroyo and Gringo Honasan. I hope the two others, Antonio Trillanes and Koko Pimentel, will be proclaimed tonight.

Loren confirmed all surveys and predictions that she would top, again, the senatorial race.

Newcomer Trillanes surprised everybody by winning. He didn't rate in the surveys and forecasts. (I predicted that he would make a respectable finish but didn't think he would finish in the Magic 12, although I endorsed him.) But he got more votes than reelectionist senators, veteran politicians and popular actors, although he was unable to campaign, being inside prison.

Honasan, who ran as an independent, also was not able to campaign personally, also being inside prison except during the latter part of the campaign after he was granted bail.

Whatever the administration says, the senatorial election was a referendum on President Macapagal-Arroyo—and the result is definitely against her. Any way you look at it, six opposition candidates, two independents and only two administration candidates is a stinging rebuke for GMA. (Only three Genuine Opposition candidates lost.) Even the two Team Unity candidates who won, Angara and Arroyo, are not identified with GMA. They have independent images. They were included in the TU slate only because the administration could not convince more of its henchmen to run.

As for those closely identified with GMA, they all ended up in the "*pechayan*." Mike Defensor would have made a good senator but because he was her former chief of staff and a loquacious apologist for her, he ended up in 15th place. In spite of being the biggest campaign spender, Prospero Pichay ended up miserably in 16th place. Chavit Singson, the administration's star witness against former President Joseph Estrada, ended up only one notch higher than the *kulelat*, Jamalul Kiram, among the 23 candidates of the two main tickets.

The two *balimbing*, Tessie Aquino-Oreta and Tito Sotto, also lost, Tessie placing only one notch above Chavit. Sotto, who many believed would win, didn't make it, either. Even the commercials and endorsements of his brethren in "Eat Bulaga" were not able to help him.

Another happy result of the last election is that the electorate is already getting wise to the actors. All the three actors in the race—Sotto, Cesar Montano and Richard Gomez—lost. Perhaps Bong Revilla and Lito Lapid are the last of them. Lapid, who has never lost an election before, finally lost, by a landslide, to Mayor Jejomar Binay in Makati. His son and fellow actor Mark also lost to a priest in the gubernatorial race in Pampanga.

A big question mark is the loss of Ralph Recto. Everybody ticked him off as a sure winner. His wife Vilma Santos won big as governor of Batangas, but Ralph only finished 8th in his home province. Why? Vilma could pull votes for herself but not for husband Ralph, as the megastar undoubtedly did for husband Kiko? Maybe the E-VAT was too heavy a load on Ralph's back.

* * *

More than five years ago, I wrote about the plight of then Deputy Customs Commissioner Emma Rosqueta who was being unjustly pushed out of the Bureau of Customs. Rosqueta was a career employee of the bureau. In a career spanning 41 years, she started as an examiner and rose to the second highest position in the bureau, that of deputy commissioner of the Revenue Collection and Monitoring Group and deputy commissioner for internal administration.

On July 13, 2001, President Arroyo appointed a newcomer and outsider, Gil Valera, to the position Rosqueta was still occupying, despite jurisprudence declaring that "no person, no matter how qualified and eligible he is for a certain position, may be appointed to an office which is not vacant," and that "an appointment to an office which is not vacant is null and void ab initio."

Rosqueta filed a petition with the Manila Regional Trial Court to prevent Finance Secretary Jose Camacho, then Customs Commissioner Titus Villanueva and Valera from implementing the appointment. The RTC issued a permanent injunction.

The Bureau of Customs went to the Court of Appeals to annul the injunction. The court issued a 60-day temporary restraining order but not an injunction. When the 60 days elapsed, the RTC injunction was revived.

While the TRO was still in force, Villanueva issued an order delegating the functions of Rosqueta to Valera. But when the TRO lapsed, Villanueva did not revoke the authority given to Valera.

Villanueva also humiliated Rosqueta by not publishing her photograph along with those of other top customs officials in the souvenir program and a commemorative magazine for the centennial celebration of the bureau. The spaces reserved for her photo were left blank. The billboard put up at the main gate of the bureau also excluded Rosqueta but included Valera.

Rosqueta filed a suit for damages with the Quezon City RTC. The RTC dismissed the complaint. Rosqueta went to the Court of Appeals.

The Court of Appeals ruled in her favor and ordered Villanueva to pay her P500,000 in moral damages, P200,000 in exemplary damages and P100,000 in attorney's fees. Villanueva said he would file a motion for reconsideration.

The court said there was malicious refusal on the part of Villanueva to comply with the writ of preliminary injunction that was valid, binding and subsisting at the time he committed the wrongful acts. The law penalizes acts which cause injury to another by awards for damages, the court said.

The gentrification of the OFW

PASSION FOR REASON

Raul C. Pangalangan

THE PAPERS REPORT A NEW TREND IN FILipino out-migration. Apparently, the report said, middle-level managers and professionals now outnumber domestic helpers and "cultural performers."

Whether the middle-class exodus is in the form of fixed-contract labor (hence the original term "OCW" or overseas contract worker) or that of outright immigration and permanent relocation, we must look instead at its true costs and benefits.

What can we expect from this new development? On the positive side, maybe the Filipino passport will command more respect when we travel abroad. I do not in any way cast any blame whatsoever on our countrymen who have taken low-skilled jobs abroad in order to sustain their families back home. They deserve our support and admiration, and I have spoken many times, in this space and elsewhere, about the redemptive power of their sacrifice.

Rather I acknowledge as a fact the deplorable practice of foreign countries that treat Filipinos shabbily. How many times have you seen Filipinas asked to form another line at airport immigration counters, on the automatic assumption that they are suspect as illegal migrants? How many times have you been questioned and scrutinized at foreign borders, while all your other friends are waved through? Yet read the text of your passport: "The Government of the Republic of the Philippines requests all concerned to permit the bearer, a citizen of the Philippines ... to pass safely and freely and ... to give him/her all lawful aid and protection."

One real achievement of affirmative-action programs in the United States—those that put a "thumb on the scale" to boost opportunities mainly for racially disadvantaged groups—is that, by enabling more and more African-Americans, Latinos and Asians to break social barriers, they also broke stereotypes. That a dark-skinned person is not automatically assumed to be the janitor; he just might be the professor. That Asians can operate not just laundries and grocery stores, but also run banks and corporations, and be doctors, nurses and lawyers.

That automatic nexus between race and line of work, say, Indians and 7-Eleven convenience stores, Chinese and dry-cleaning, Koreans and fruit stalls—what broke it best? For our purposes, what would it take to smash the stereotype of the Filipino as a maid? A thousand pious sermons that we are all equal in the eyes of God? Or a face-to-face encounter with a bright Filipino doctor on whom your life depends? Try telling your surgeon to form another queue because he/she is Filipino.

The need to break racial stereotypes should teach us other lessons as well. One, we must not practice racial stereotyping ourselves. We must end the Filipino—indeed, Southeast Asian—penchant to single out Chinese merchants for extortion and the native bureaucracy's willingness to look the other way. It is particularly embarrassing for the Philippines, almost all of whose national heroes are Chinese-Filipinos.

Two, the educated and sophisticated Filipino elite, which loves to distance itself from the hoi polloi, must realize that, once abroad, they are all in the same dilapidated boat. All of them will in various ways feel the brunt of foreigners' bigotry. Thus, domestically, Filipinos love to classify themselves according to wealth and class, and delight in pecking orders: who went to the classiest schools, wear the flashiest clothes, drive the fancy cars and other preoccupations of the Pinoy petty bourgeoisie. Yet, once they stand at immigration counters abroad, they suddenly recognize what they all have in common: their Philippine passports.

The downside of the middle-class shift of the Pinoy diaspora is more familiar, but it is also nothing new. We have feared the brain drain for as long as I can remember, yet we have not suffered—and indeed have benefited—from the continuing supply of brains that we educate and then export.

What we should aim at, rather, is what the Indian techies have done. They went to America, thrived in Silicon Valley and returned to invest in Bangalore with fresh capital and know-how. The South Korean and Taiwanese migrant communities have likewise kept alive their bonds to the homeland. The Filipino communities abroad must not limit those bonds to regular remittances to families back home. They must ensure that, 10 or 15 years down the road, a new generation of "hyphenated" Filipinos will have knowledge and capital to re-invest.

Finally, have you ever wondered exactly when Filipinos learned to line up at bus stops and jeepney stops? When I returned to Manila after several years of graduate studies abroad, I noticed this absolutely incredible phenomenon of discipline and forbearance. I can only surmise that the practice began from returning OFWs who must have told their compatriots that people in foreign lands had a civilized way to ride buses. The cultural transfer of "best practices" from abroad should accelerate with the middle-class shift of the Pinoy diaspora. They after all are better equipped to make the most of e-mail and the Internet, with equally voluble networks of friends back home.

The gentrification of the OFW is a sad commentary on Philippine life. The poor leave for lack of money, the wealthy leave for lack of hope. But we are not the first, nor are we alone, in this tragedy. Other nations—Ireland, Italy, Poland, even Finland—have gone through similar phases, and now thrive and, indeed, play host to OFWs. As the old prayer goes, we ask for the courage to change the things that we can change, the patience to accept the things we cannot change, and the wisdom to know the difference.

* * *

Comments to passionforreason@gmail.com

Annihilation

ANALYSIS

Amando Doronila

THE IMPACT OF THE OVERWHELMING OPPOsition sweep of the Senate election was so shocking to the Arroyo administration that it took more than a week after the 8-2-2 result had firmed up to recover from the shock and to concede it had lost control of the Senate.

If we use a boxing metaphor, the administration lay flat on its back on the canvas with arms spread-eagled too long after the referee had counted 10. The Commission on Elections on Wednesday proclaimed 10 winners—six from the Genuine Opposition (GO), two independents and two from Team Unity (TU)—with the remaining two to be proclaimed after the canvassing of up to a million votes from disputed returns coming from a handful of Mindanao provinces. The 11th and 12th slots are a toss-up among GO's Antonio Trillanes and Aquilino Pimentel III, who are currently occupying the 11th and 12th slots, respectively, and TU's Juan Miguel Zubiri.

Even assuming the optimistic result of Zubiri winning one more seat for the administration, the overall landscape nevertheless presents an annihilation for the government in the Senate and finds President Macapagal-Arroyo in her weakest position vis-à-vis the Senate since she took office six years ago and after two elections, in 2002 (mid-term) and 2004 (presidential).

As the Senate balance of forces stood yesterday, the opposition had gained a more commanding majority of nearly two-thirds of the 24-seat Senate. Apart from reelectionist Senators Edgardo Angara and Joker Arroyo, the administration depends precariously on a block of seven to eight senators, including Juan Ponce Enrile, Manuel Lapid, Ramon Revilla Jr. and Miriam Defensor-Santiago. Angara and Arroyo are by no means to be counted as steadfast Arroyo allies. They survived the strong opposition tide in the Senate election on the strength of their relatively independent legislative records in the Senate and escaped being stigmatized as lackeys of the President.

So, with the new composition of the Senate after May 14, it is there where the battle for profound policy change of the national agenda for at least the remaining three years of the Arroyo presidency is going to take place with fiercer intensity than at any time during the last Congress. The May election has embedded three military representatives in the Senate: reelected Sen. Panfilo Lacson and Gregorio Honasan and newcomer Antonio Trillanes—sad to say all alumni of the Philippine Military Academy, which since the twilight years of the Marcos dictatorship has been the cradle of messianic adventurism and intervention by the military in Philippine democracy.

Although Lacson was one of the few remaining loyalists of deposed President Joseph Estrada (he was Estrada's chief of the Philippine National Police) when the general staff led by AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Angelo Reyes, withdrew support from his elected government, Honasan and Trillanes represent the pernicious putschist culture of the Philippine military alive in our democracy.

This enlarged pocket of militarist culture in the Senate could make it difficult for the Arroyo administration to carry out reforms in the Armed Forces to clean up the coup tendencies in the officer corps and revamp the key commands, which have been tagged by international human rights organizations as responsible for the death squad killings of political activists during the past six years.

Only two days ago, Ms Arroyo began to show signs that she had woken up to the annihilation that hit her government in the Senate. She gave hints she was considering a Cabinet revamp, telling reporters, "I'm ready. When I'm ready you will know."

Since the early results formed an imminent opposition sweep in the Senate, she was in a state of denial and embarked on a series of foreign trips, including to Australia, Rome and Portugal, in an effort to escape the specter of the political disaster that foreshadowed difficulties in launching new economic and political initiatives in what appears to be developing into a lame-duck season for her government. Hours before the proclamation of the top 10 Senate winners, Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita indicated that the administration had at last recognized that it had been mauled badly. He told reporters, "The mandate has been given by the people."

The problem is what "mandate" and message the administration read from the poll results. In reading the mandate correctly, it is critically important to identify the policy areas which generated the issues that created widespread public unrest and translated into votes that inundated the TU senatorial candidates. The focus has now moved to the areas of the administration and of justice and security involving military responsibility. A revamp in the Department of Justice, especially the sacking of Secretary Raul Gonzalez, and the Department of National Defense will tell us whether the President has learned the lesson of May 14 and read the people's mandate correctly.

The revamp in those key area takes priority and her response to calls for reform in those areas of policy review will determine political stability as the foundation upon which to consolidate the economic gains of the past three years. The House elections involve another mandate, which essentially deals with the issue of another impeachment move against the President. The numbers there are the key element of that mandate. The administration coalition retained its majority dominance in the House, but for policy review and redirection, it takes second place to the Senate results. The House results require separate analysis.

The side of life

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

(Edited version of a talk delivered at the swearing-in ceremonies for new midwives held yesterday at the Manila Hotel.)

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR INVITING ME TO address all of you, newly licensed midwives, as well as your families, friends and supporters. Thank you for devoting your precious time at this momentous occasion in your lives to listen to a journalist and a women's advocate. Some of you may have expected to hear from a healthcare professional or an expert in your field of midwifery. I hope that what I have to say will at least be of some inspiration, if not encouragement, to you.

I once wrote that midwives have often been viewed as handmaids to doctors and nurses, not quite health professionals and sometimes even considered little better than nursemaids. And yet, if an honest evaluation of your work and importance to society is done, we would all realize that midwives play a crucial role in the health-delivery system of this country.

Along with barangay health workers, midwives form the frontline of the healthcare system. It is you who "woman" health centers, who deal first-hand with mothers and their children, who provide information and services, especially in the care of expectant mothers and the delivery of babies.

Indeed, it could be said that you midwives are our mothers, mothers of our neighborhoods and communities, who look after our children's health and welfare, and who monitor and report on the health conditions of neighbors and clients to spot a public health problem before it escalates into a crisis.

Though often unheralded, you midwives play a crucial role in the creation and maintenance of a healthy society. You serve as a bridge between the lowly citizen and the often-impersonal and intimidating health system. So take a bow, newly minted midwives. You and the work you will be doing matter a lot!

* * *

IT'S said that the health system in the Philippines is facing a crisis—if it isn't already in the midst of it. Apart from the lack of funds and resources, the country is also faced with a fast-dwindling pool of health professionals. We all have heard about the migration of doctors to the nursing profession. And we all know that the number of doctors and nurses who choose to leave the country and work abroad is reaching unprecedented levels. Unfortunately, joining them are midwives, many of whom abandon their training and profession altogether to work as nursemaids or housemaids.

Some—or maybe many—of you will doubtless be joining this migratory flock soon. And let me say that you are well within your rights to seek a better life and a more secure future for yourselves and your families. But think a while about why you chose to be midwives in the first place. Part of the appeal of midwifery was doubtless the chance to work directly with mothers and their children, to be of service to patients who could in time be your neighbors and friends. And yet, if you were to leave at once for more lucrative options abroad, you would be missing this chance to both serve and inspire, to practice your profession among people who need your energy, skill and heart the most.

Would it be too much to ask that you stay around for a few years before you set off for a future among foreigners?

* * *

ALLOW me at this point to talk about another advocacy with you. But first, let me tell you about a documentary I just viewed last night that was called "Formula for Disaster." Produced by Unicef, the documentary details the ways in which milk companies routinely violate the Milk Code with aggressive marketing practices, including compromising health workers and midwives by pressuring them to promote infant formula brands and giving away material incentives.

Let me tell you that I was most shocked by health workers who could mouth the various brands of infant formula but hardly spoke of the advantages of breast milk, even if they said their main task was to promote breast-feeding. Midwives interviewed for the documentary said that while the Milk Code does not allow them to entertain drug and milk company representatives in the health centers, "politeness" prevented them from driving them away, so they would entertain the sales reps briefly and graciously accept the freebies they offered.

Still, "Formula for Disaster" was not all negative. It also featured two midwives—one in Cebu, the other in Bohol—who believed so strongly in the advantages of breast-feeding that they refused even the most tempting offers from milk companies and turned down even the most innocuous items.

* * *

YOU, better than me, know what the decline in breast-feeding in this country means. Just 16 percent of Filipino children between 4 and 5 months old are exclusively breast-fed, and as one foreigner commented, this is "one of the lowest documented rates in the world."

The World Health Organization says some 16,000 babies a year die here as a result of the decline in breast-feeding. Many of these deaths can be attributed to malnutrition and diarrhea, as a consequence of parents diluting the formula to make it last longer, using the wrong kind of milk, or using unsafe water or contaminated bottles and nipples. As midwives, you will see with your own eyes the horrific consequences of bottle-feeding, including the slow, painful decline of bottle-fed children from chronic illness, lethargy and mental retardation.

But as midwives, too, you are in a powerful position to turn this decline around, to stand as frontliners against the marketing onslaught of multinational milk companies and to stand as witness to the joys and benefits of breast-feeding. I hope you choose the right side—the side of life, the side of what is truly best for our babies.

Flag and anthem

LOOKING BACK

Ambeth R. Ocampo

INDEPENDENCE DAY IS JUST AROUND THE corner and we will have flags galore again. We just hope that provision is made for taking these down on June 13 so that our national symbol is not allowed to deteriorate into rags over the year.

There has been a lot of e-mail response to my column on the Flag and Heraldic Code of the Philippines and I just hope that my annual column on the flag each June not only reminds citizens of the historical and symbolic meaning of the flag but also makes readers aware that we do have a Flag Law.

For a number of years now, I have followed the example of former Agriculture Secretary Salvador Escudero (now better known as "The Father of Chiz Escudero") who carries a handful of flags around in his car so that when he travels around the city or other parts of the country and spots a worn out flag, especially in a government office or a police station, he goes down, asks that the old flag be brought down and disposed of properly, and hands them a new one. I would suggest that the flags used during Independence Day be distributed to government offices so that at least each of them will have a new flag once a year. Maybe we could even extend this to cover new flags on Dec. 30, Rizal Day, so that government buildings, schools, etc. will have new flags twice a year.

The Flag Law does not only cover the flag and the anthem, it also has provisions on heraldry, and the seals used by the state and its branches. That is worth another column, but the topic is best left to Manolo Quezon who has done more research on heraldry than me. What amuses me is the use of the Great Seal of the Republic by individuals who have no right to use it. The same use and abuse are made especially of the Seal of the President of the Philippines that came into public consciousness when Erap wore it literally on his sleeve, or rather his wristband. The Seal of the President is usually seen on cars in an effort to intimidate traffic enforcers.

Cars sporting press cards dangling from the rear view mirror or signs on windshields that read "Doctor on Call" should be stopped, and if no journalist or doctor is in the vehicle, they should be given a ticket. Frankly, traffic enforcers and police don't seem to mind these just as they ignore the sirens, blinkers, "*wang-wang*" and whatever contraptions used in private cars posing as government or police vehicles.

I'm starting to rant and rave, so I must stop now and just share some e-mail responses on the Flag Law, all of which I have forwarded to the National Historical Institute for their information.

Sony Ng, of the Museum Volunteers of the Philippines, wondered why we play the national anthem at the slightest excuse. She noted that when it is played in movie houses, sometimes the anthem is not appropriate for what is being screened. Perhaps, she said, if we don't hear it as often, its absence might make the heart grow fonder.

Another reader, Ren Aguila, wrote:

"I would agree with your column [May 30, 2007] concerning the flag and anthem, particularly the way one treats the national flag. A lot of people, even in government, do not know how to treat it properly. During the rainstorms of the last few days, I saw not a few flagpoles in government buildings whose flags weren't lowered at all. In fact, common sense, not legislation, should tell us that anything left in the rain will get wet and shoddy!

"On the issue of the anthem, I've recently come to the conclusion that preference ought to be given to treating the anthem as something played, not sung. The Marcha Nacional had no lyrics at the time of its composition, and its arrangement as prescribed in 1996, for example, is as close as one could get to the original. It is unsingable. And probably it should be that way, because we would not have things like a Cebuano version of the anthem if instrumental versions were used in most official events to remind us of the earliest historical context in which our anthem existed.

"Maybe one compromise would be to amend the Flag Law so that in regions where a version in another language exists (much like in Canada), the regional version (which should be vetted by the NHI) may be played before the version in the national language. Or since the government is so eager for us to use English in our educational system and elsewhere, we should restore English as the language of the anthem's lyrics. I am sure older generations will have fond, or not-so-fond, memories of 'Land of the morning....' I do not want to see in this country the sad situation of Singapore. There, the anthem, which is only in Malay, cannot be understood by people who grew up using English as a medium of instruction without a translation!

"Incidentally, while the instrumental and orchestral versions of the anthem are not commercially available, the very familiar orchestral version (whose last part one can hear in Francis M's classic 'Mga Kababayan Ko') is available online. I recently came across another instrumental version which includes the four ruffles and flourishes for military events. (No guns, though.)"

The issue of the national language we can address in a column for Buwan ng Wika, but it is quite timely to listen to the current debates in the United States on declaring English as their official language.

* * *

Comments are welcome at aocampo@ateneo.edu

Cultural ecology

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

THE RAINS ARE HERE SO, EVER SO CONSCIOUS OF THE dangers of mosquitoes, we go out to our gardens to check for possible breeding grounds. We look for empty flowerpots, buckets, cans, even old tires that might have accumulated water which is now teeming with squirming mosquito larvae, draining them and feeling our families are safe.

Think again. Have you checked inside the house? Do you have flowers that have been in their vases for several days now, with unchanged water? What about those bromeliads, with leaves designed by nature to keep water? Do you have an aquarium, a fishpond, now without fish but still with water? Do you have toilets that are rarely used but because you left the seat cover up, its water has now become a sports club for mosquitoes?

I was shocked the other day when my father told me he'd found mosquito larvae in his toilet, not in the latrine but, of all places, in his water pick set-up. These gadgets have a little receptacle where you pour in water which flows into a pick to clean the teeth. If you forget to throw out the water after use, it attracts mosquitoes.

Not only that, my father found mosquitoes breeding as well in his bedroom, in the drainage slot or filter below the taps of the water dispenser! These filters take up the water that misses your cup when you're filling it. The water can accumulate, and is stagnant, providing a virtual resort pool for the mosquitoes.

Scary, huh? You're surrounded by mosquitoes waiting with dengue, malaria. Even the dogs are at risk, from heartworm.

Tapping nature

We tend to blame nature for many of our health problems, from winds ("*ay, nahanginan*") and the heat to mosquitoes and birds (for avian flu) but forget it's what we do to nature that either creates health or illness.

There's a whole area of study, sometimes called cultural ecology, sometimes ecological anthropology, that looks into human interactions with our natural environment. The term "cultural ecology" is especially useful, highlighting how our interactions with the environment create "culture." Early humans looked for ways to protect themselves from the elements, and came up with clothes and shelter, both of which are components of culture. (And because humans were imaginative, we went beyond function to create aesthetics, which is why we have fashions and architecture, and that's still cultural.)

Nature poses challenges to us, but is also often a source of resources and solutions. All over the world, people learned to tap all kinds of materials for clothing, from plants as well as animals (until furs became politically incorrect). In Mindanao, many of our indigenous groups still know how to process tree barks into cloth (as in the T'boli *tnalak*). Today, we still rely pretty much on nature for clothing materials, cotton and silk, for example.

We transform nature each time we tap it, and often enough, there will be consequences. Depleted resources would be one of the more dramatic effects, but there are many smaller chains of events that we overlook, as I have just described with the mosquitoes.

We just need to be more aware of how our interactions with nature bring both benefits and risks. Pets are a prime example. We domesticated dogs (and they, us) for mutual benefit, but for most of human history, dogs stayed outside the home in most cultures. In the last 50 years or so, for many different reasons—companionship, therapy, even as work animals such as seeing-eye dogs—more people began to bring dogs into the home. That has meant adjusting to new problems like fleas and allergies. For the most part, we've managed quite well. I sometimes wonder if it's the dogs who face greater risks, confronted with new problems in a home environment.

Let's not forget, too, the technologies we developed to tap into nature more effectively. My father's water pick and water dispenser are examples of ways by which we've tried to bring water into our household for specific purposes. In modern times, the technologies have allowed more intensive ways of exploiting nature, which can mean greater risks and problems.

CSI

In many ways, cultural ecology is a bit like doing forensic investigation except that it looks at culture and society for "evidence" and answers. Oliver Sacks, the neurologist and writer, is an example of someone who understands cultural ecology. One of his best-known investigations was into a neurological disease in a South Pacific island. Like a detective, he looked into every cultural nook and cranny and eventually found that the disease was caused by a kind of wild root crop they were eating.

As a medical anthropologist, I look into how cultures deal with health and illness. Inevitably, cultural ecology comes into the picture. I include a bit of cultural ecology whenever I can in lectures to health professionals, and I am developing a module on the topic for the medical schools at UP and Ateneo (OK, OK, I'll share it, too, with West Visayas State University and . . .) We need to train our health professionals to go beyond germs as they try to control diseases. I'm going to give one more example for mosquito-borne diseases. I remember one public health expert telling me years ago that he suspected cement hollow blocks to be another breeding area for mosquitoes. He's probably right, given how porous the blocks are. That's cultural ecology, too.

The world is finally coming to its cultural ecological senses. Awareness of human-instigated climate change is the best example. Our activities have set off global warming in an unprecedented way, and fears of new health problems, including "tropical" diseases emerging in temperate areas.

In a way, diseases and their vectors (like mosquitoes) are "smart" because they embed themselves in our culture, in our lifeways, which we take for granted. Really now, who but the most obsessive-compulsive would have looked at the water dispenser filter for mosquito larvae?

You, too, can be a cultural ecologist. Think now of all the other interactions we have with nature—in nutrition, shelter, clothing, in all kinds of daily activities—and identify the benefits they bring as well as the problems. Recruit your kids for your own Disease-busting Crime Scene Investigation at home and don't arm them with insecticide to kill the mosquitoes. Explain that all you need to do is empty all those buckets and cans, clean out the water dispenser, re-stock ponds and aquaria with fish. Work with, rather than against, nature.

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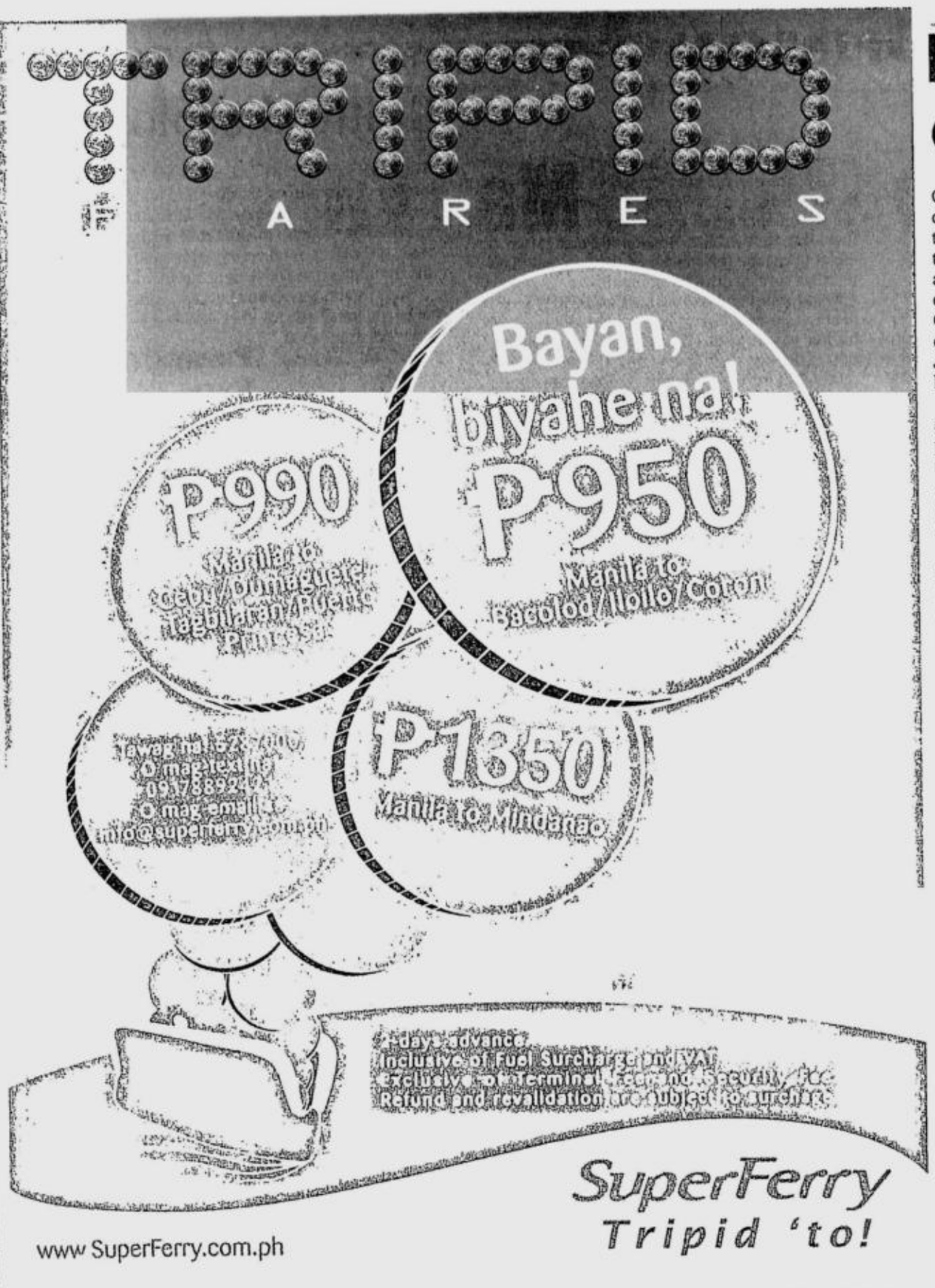

Questions for the GSIS

LETTERS

GSIS PENSIONERS ARE WONDERING WHY, despite the numerous letters published in national newspapers, Winston Garcia continues to turn a deaf ear to the clamor for the immediate upgrading and release of their pensions. As of this writing, there are still pensioners in Catanduanes who have not received their eCards and, therefore, also their pensions from January to May of this year, as well as their bonuses and survivors' benefits.

Before Garcia became GSIS president, pensioners would receive, every December, a 10-percent increase in their pensions. It seems Garcia is more concerned about earning immense profits from real estate investments than with the needs of the sickly, poor and aged pensioners.

When I went to the GSIS main office to apply for my eCard, I saw crowds of old, sickly, pale, blind, frail, coughing and disabled pensioners (some were in wheelchairs accompanied either by their spouse, or a grandson or a household helper) applying for their eCard. To my surprise, I met a long-lost friend. On dextrose and in a wheelchair, he was escorted by a daughter-nurse and his wife. I patted him on his knee, called his name and identified myself to him, but he could no longer respond. He was seriously ill. I came to know he died a few weeks later.

Why must Garcia require elderly pensioners to undergo the regular process of applying for an eCard and thus suffer long hours in crowded GSIS offices far away from their homes? Under Sec. 15, Rule V of the implementing rules and regulations for the Senior Citizens Law, private, commercial and government establishments should provide them express lanes. Why is the GSIS ignoring this provision of law and making it so difficult for elderly pensioners to enjoy their benefits on time? Almost all pensioners are sickly and disabled, and they need their pensions as a matter of survival. Many of them won't last till the issuance of their eCards. In fact, many of them have died because they couldn't buy their maintenance medicines due to delayed pensions.

Pensioners find it too complicated to operate the ATM. And it is difficult for them to travel where ATM machines are available.

In the May 8 issue of the INQUIRER, the GSIS proudly announced that it has P200 billion in its pension fund which it is ready to invest in real estate business. Garcia even said that "he was not looking at any limits as long as it was within the pension fund's capability to pay."

The question is, why deprive the pensioners of the immediate benefits they can derive from their investable funds? Why doesn't Garcia recommend the allocation of a small portion of the P200-billion pensioners' investable funds for a 10- to 20-percent increase in pensioner's pay? If the Social Security System could afford to give two 10-percent increases in its pension pay in one year, why can't the GSIS? Why doesn't the President issue an order to this effect?

—MANUEL A. MAGISTRADO,
Virac, Catanduanes

Vote-buying also makes elections 'dirty'

IN THE JUNE 5 ISSUE OF THE INQUIRER, Daniel Melegrito, in his letter to the editor, challenged Bishop Soc Villegas' claim that the 2007 elections in Bataan was the "dirtiest" ever. Cheating or vote-buying—both are dirty. It is true there were clear winners, if it was all a matter of counting the votes. What if the votes were cast in exchange for P1,500 or more? Were those votes not to be considered "dirty"?

Melegrito should know that Bishop Villegas' pastoral letter—and the letter stressed this—was not for or against any group, winner or loser, but for the guidance of the flock of believers.

By 6 p.m. of May 14, the bishop had already inquired from the priests and PPCRV volunteers about the conduct of the election. Based on their assessments, he wrote the pastoral letter, with the priests in assembly. Most of these priests have been voters, some as far back as 1975.

—MSGR. ROMEO T. BANABAN,
Cathedral Parish of St. Joseph,
Balanga City

AHI is not a Dutch company

THIS HAS REFERENCE TO THE articles, which appeared in several newspapers—including the INQUIRER—on the controversial Philippine national broadband network project, for which a company named Amsterdam Holdings Inc. (AHI) submitted an unsolicited proposal to the Department of Transportation and Communications, which proposal was evaluated by the National Economic and Development Authority.

I am writing to set the record straight: there is—as far as our background checks allow us to conclude—no existing company in the Netherlands by the name of Amsterdam Holdings Inc. Neither is there a Dutch business partner or Dutch equity in AHI.

I understand that the name "Amsterdam" Holdings Inc. may have created the impression that a Dutch company is involved in the proposed project.

—PAULA SCHINDELER,
second secretary,
Economic and Cultural Affairs,
Royal Netherlands Embassy,
8751 Paseo de Roxas St.,
Makati City

Urban flooding is unattended to

SUMMER IS OFFICIALLY OVER. the rainy season is on. While the rains are supposed to be a welcome relief from a scorching summer season, they inevitably bring to mind the perennial problem of flooding that hit urban centers like Metro Manila. The floods are said to be caused primarily by clogged drainage systems and improper garbage disposal, among other things. These causes have been identified long before. The question is: Why haven't they been attended to?

With the rainy season upon us, typhoons are not far behind. Typhoons cause landslides, flashfloods and mudflows, and massive devastation. The damage to property they caused last year was estimated at nearly P20 billion; affected were about 2.3 million families or 11 million people.

In the Bicol region alone, where Typhoon Reming killed 695 people, left nearly 600 others missing and dislocated 500,000 families or at least 2.5 million residents, schoolhouses continue to serve as homes to hundreds of families. And to think that the school year has started. Also, with Mt. Bulusan in Sorsogon acting up, evacuation plans are needed for communities lying in the possible paths of lahar flows.

But even as the victims are still trying to recover from the destruction caused by the typhoons last year and to get back to their normal lives, they face the same risks all over again this year.

The government's allocation of a bigger calamity fund for this year—compared to last year's measly allocation of 0.1 percent of the national budget—is welcome news. More than the issue of funding, however, there is a need to come up with a more comprehensive and long-term disaster management program that addresses the roots of the people's vulnerabilities and strengthens the communities' capacities.

The knee-jerk "management" of disasters has been tried, tested and proven to be an exercise in futility in a country known to be one of the most disaster-prone countries in the world.

—AUNARIO S. LUCERO JR.,
public information and advocacy officer, Citizens' Disaster Response Center Inc.,
72-A Times St.,
West Triangle Homes, QC

Overpopulation is not a myth

THIS IS IN REACTION TO THE letter titled, "Overpopulation: a 20th-century myth" (INQUIRER, 5/26/07), where Nicolo F. Bernardo said that overpopulation is a myth. Maybe in other countries, but definitely not here in the Philippines.

In the latest update (2006), the Philippines, with a land area of only 300,000 sq km, has a population of more than 89 million, making it the world's 12th most populous country. Italy has almost the same land area, but it has only 58 million people.

Is it a myth that one of our country's main problems is overpopulation?

Everywhere you go, you can see squatter areas; and in Metro Manila, there are families "residing" literally under the open sky, practically making the sidewalks their homes—the result of overpopulation.

Yes, a large population is a self-sustaining human capital if educated, employed and made productive. The only problem is how to do this with our people, considering that the Philippines is a Third World country.

The only solution seen by the Philippine Legislators' Committee on Population and Development is family planning, which should allow the use of artificial methods of birth control, which I think is a measure urgently needed to control population growth. What is lacking in the government's population program is the dissemination, countrywide, of proper information about family planning.

—GERALD T. MAGNO,
44 P. Narciso St.,
San Juan, Metro Manila

So The Insuring Public May Know

Recently, the Philippine non-life insurers have been criticized in the media about under payment of 2006 taxes and under capitalization by its own government regulator, the Insurance Commission. The industry has resorted to this paid advertisement so that the public may know the truth.

1. 2006 P8B TAX UNDERPAYMENT NEWS NOT TRUE.

The recent announcement of the Insurance Commission that the insurance industry owed the government some P8 billion in unpaid 2006 taxes is erroneous and truly unfair.

The news erred in that the Insurance Commission's computations did not exclude VAT-exempt premiums of medical/PA policies and zero-rated VAT for PEZA locators, but included VAT on accounts receivables that are only due when collected in 2007 and income taxes payable in April 2007.

Without doing any validation with insurance companies, the Insurance Commission summarily issued an announcement that unduly prejudiced good corporate taxpayers by labeling an entire industry as tax cheats.

The partial results of an ongoing survey being done among non-life insurers show that paid taxes increased from P2.36 billion in 2005 to P2.5 billion in 2006 (documentary stamps tax, VAT, fire service tax, local government taxes and income taxes).

The VAT and DST taxes at 24.5% of premiums are the highest in terms of percentage of non-life premiums in all countries in Asia and most countries in the world.

2. CAPITALIZATION NEWS PREJUDICIAL TO INSURERS.

The past year, the Department of Finance, upon the recommendation of the Insurance Commission, imposed a higher capitalization requirement on all insurance companies in a bid to lift the industry to the level of more developed countries.

Though it is widely believed that the new requirement was fiscally premature given the size of the market and the country's economic realities, still we all are doing our best to comply with the Risk Based Capital implementation.

Notwithstanding, the Insurance Commission jumped the gun and announced the names of 15 companies that have allegedly failed to meet the 2006 capitalization level. The announcement was reckless to say the least as it included even companies that have capitalization higher than the requirement. These companies suffered cancellation of policies and bank accreditation and lost renewal business due to the negative news.

The Insurance Commission's publication of unverified data again undermined the integrity and credibility of the named companies who were compelled to issue press releases just to be vindicated and their side heard. The industry suffered peripherally and, somehow, lost credibility with the insuring public.

3. INSURERS DESERVE DUE PROCESS.

The Insurance Commission has been issuing many circulars, some of which were without sufficient consultation with industry players and without appreciation of market realities. Recently, there was the difficult requirement for insurance brokers and agents to secure a P1.5-million guaranty payment bond at a prohibitive cost of P40,000 to P50,000 with collateral which is all out of proportion to the P3,600 minimum insurance income prescribed in the Insurance Code. The new requirement would result in disenfranchising small and provincial agents from turning to the non-life industry for life-giving income. In a country with noticeable unemployment and underemployment, this action restricts the nationwide opportunities for job creation.

The recent acts of the Insurance Commission that unduly embarrassed the industry could have been avoided had there been open lines of communication between the Commission and industry players. The non-life insurance industry has been in existence for over 100 years now and we recognize that change is inevitable and it can even redound to the benefit of both the industry and the public when an atmosphere of respect, open and constructive dialogue as well as positive action is cultivated.

We need an Insurance Commission that would guide us in transforming the industry cognizant of the need to protect and serve the public, and compliant with the principles of Good Corporate Governance.

More than anybody else, the Insurance Commission should realize that public credibility is the cornerstone of any business and our industry is determined to uphold this even in these extremely trying and uncertain times.

Philippine Insurers and Reinsurers Association, Inc. (PIRA)
Umbrella organization of 93 non-life insurance companies in the Philippines

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No verbal clash before shooting of farmers–TFM

By Carla P. Gomez
Inquirer Visayas

BACOLOD CITY—THE PEASANT GROUP TASK FORCE MAPALAD yesterday denied claims that a heated argument between farmer-beneficiaries and security guards of Hacienda Velez-Malaga in La Castellana, Negros Occidental ensued prior to the shooting Monday that left two farmers dead and six others wounded.

TFM president Jose Rodito Angeles, in a press statement, said the farmer-beneficiaries, numbering about 100, were working on the 5-hectare portion of the hacienda earlier awarded to them by the government when three shotgun wielding security guards of landowner Roberto Cuenca took positions behind trees and started firing at them.

Killed in the shooting were Alejandro Garcesa, 70, and Ely Tupas, 52. Wounded were Jude Capitania, 32, Jobert Malayas, 25, Rene Florendia, 27, Alan Hagocoy, 26, Norberto Diamante, 47, and Andre Barcoma, 17.

Angeles said the farmer-beneficiaries were caught by surprise, but some of them were able to drive away the security guards with rocks and slingshots.

"The police were just saying there was an argument between the farmers and the guards to hide the fact that they did nothing to prevent the shooting. They merely watched. Only after some 30 minutes, when an angry farmer-beneficiary berated them, did they try to intervene, but even then they did not try to help the injured farmers," he said.

Florenda Hilario, another farmer-beneficiary, said that before they entered the 5-hectare portion—the very site where they were installed by Agrarian Reform Secretary Nasser Pangandaman last March 22—they talked to the commanding officer of the Regional Mobile Group (RMG) detachment in the hacienda and asked for protection.

Hilario said the RMG detachment was just across the road where the guardhouse of the hacienda's security men was located.

She said the RMG commanding officer, Sgt. Ricky Padasas, refused to assist because there was still no word from DAR.

"We decided to enter our land because we felt the DAR was again giving us the run around for too long. No heated arguments with Cuenca's blue guards took place. The guards fired at us without provocation when we were already on the field," Hilario said.

She said the shooting, based on the timeline of photographs taken of the attack, started at 10:03 a.m. and lasted for 13 minutes, before the RMG tried to intervene.

She added that a contingent of the Philippine Army arrived at around 11:30 a.m. to block the group of Cuenca's workers who had massed up and threatened to attack the farmer-beneficiaries.

She said the police had not arrested any of the guards involved in the shooting. "The police have made some arrests, but they were the wrong guys," she said.

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Arson seen in burning of ballot boxes kept in Mabalacat town hall

By Tonette Orejas
Inquirer Central Luzon

MABALACAT, PAMPANGA—FIRE investigators suspected arson in the early Thursday morning fire here that destroyed 154 of 399 ballot boxes containing the election materials being contested by losing gubernatorial candidate Lilia Pineda and her ally, Mabalacat mayoral bet Anthony Dee.

Senior Supt. Ma. Luisa Hadjula, director of the Bureau of Fire Protection in Central Luzon said "huge amounts of alleged gasoline, several plastic containers, boxes of matches and coils of mosquito killers" had been recovered from the burned stock room at the back of the Mabalacat town hall.

The items were taken to the BFP national office for examination and it would take more or less two weeks before the results would be known, she said.

Hadjula said there were no suspects yet in the suspected arson. The fire started at 3 a.m. and was put under control 40 minutes later.

Lawyer Temie Lambino, supervisor of the Commission on Elections in Pampanga, said all 154 ballot boxes containing official ballots and election results were destroyed.

He said the burned ballots represented 41 percent of all the official ballots in Mabalacat.

The rest of the ballot boxes were "okay," he said, citing the results of the inventory that ended at 2 p.m.

Lambino confirmed Hadjula's report about the smell of gasoline and the discovery of insect repellant at the stockroom.

"Initially, we were told that the fire began from the roof," he said.

He said Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos Jr. had approved his request to transfer the ballot boxes to the Pampanga police headquarters at the provincial capitol in the City of San Fernando.

THE MOST GUARDED items during the counting of votes in Pampanga, ballot boxes, are chained at the provincial canvassing venue prior to the proclamation of Fr. Eddie Panlilio as new Pampanga governor. TONETTE OREJAS/INQUIRER CENTRAL LUZON

Lambino said the burning may have an implication on the election protest filed by Pineda.

Pineda has sought a revision of votes in Magalang, Mabalacat and Candaba towns.

"If Board Member Pineda would overrun the results of election from the towns of Magalang and Candaba, it would be useless to open the ballot boxes from Mabalacat. If she would not overrun the votes of Among Ed (Governor-elect Fr. Eddie Panlilio), she would have to have opened the remaining ballot boxes in Mabalacat," Lambino said.

Panlilio led by 1,147 votes by garnering a total of 219,706 votes over Pineda's 218,559.

Outgoing Gov. Mark Lapid led in Mabalacat by obtaining 21,419 votes as against Panlilio's 16,476 votes and Pineda's 13,491 votes.

In Magalang, Panlilio, Pineda and Lapid got 11,097, 9,428 and 7,795 votes, respectively.

In Candaba, Pineda received 14,730 votes; Lapid, 14,219; and Panlilio, 9,233.

Panlilio's counsel, Dante David, said he has the original duplicates of the certificates of votes and canvass and the minutes of canvass.

"We are ready to oppose Pineda's alleged protest at the Comelec," David said.

Pineda could not be reached for comments. Her son Dennis, mayor of Lubao, told the INQUIRER on Saturday that he suspected Lapid and some of his supporters to have altered the results.

Lapid, through his campaign manager Fidel Arcenas, denied rigging the election.

Dee also contested the outcome of the election in the town when reelected Mayor Marino Morales took in a lead of 750 votes, Lambino said.

Lambino said it was municipal treasurer Angelito Pelayo, not Comelec municipal supervisor Joselito Matias, who has custody of the election materials. Pelayo could not be reached for comments.

Lambino also corrected earlier reports by the local treasurer's office to the police that the stockroom contained more than 700 ballot boxes. "There are only 399 boxes," he clarified.

Reelected Mabalacat Mayor Marino Morales denied an initial police report which said that he ordered the lone guard on duty that morning to leave his post.

He was in Manila when it happened, Morales said in a phone interview. "I have nothing to do with the incident. It is sad that I am being blamed," he said.

NEW AIRPORT ARNOLD ALMACEN/INQUIRER VISAYAS
Workers put finishing touches on the newly built Iloilo International Airport which was scheduled for opening on June 13. President Macapagal-Arroyo was expected to be the main guest at the airport opening.

Goby fish sends 7 to hospital

DAGUPAN CITY—SEVEN PERsons, including a three-year-old girl, from a neighborhood in Labrador, Pangasinan, were rushed to the Regional 1 Medical Center here on Wednesday for food poisoning after eating a fish locally known as "bonor."

The victims were Ruben Cubing, 37, his wife Lina, 30, his daughter Rubilyn, 3, his nephew, Dexter Santos, 21, and neighbors Juan Dongonan, 50, and son George, 22, and Renilla Santos, 50, all from Barangay Lawis in Labrador.

The elder Dongonan said he and Cubing got the fish Wednesday morning from their fish nets at a river separating Labrador and Lingayen towns and ate them for breakfast.

'Dizzy and numb'

"After two hours, we felt dizzy and numb," said Dongonan in Pangasinan.

Dr. George Soriano, one of the victims' attending doctors, confirmed that the manifestations felt by the victims were consistent with food poisoning. He said the victims were still being observed.

"Bonor" ('biya' in Tagalog or 'bunog' in Ilocano) contains a toxic substance called tetrodotoxin that is also present in the puffer fish (locally called 'botete'), according to local fishery officials.

Warned

The city agriculture office here warned the public against catching, selling and eating *bonor* after local fishermen caught the fish in their fish traps last year.

In May last year, three persons died and 26 others were hospitalized after eating goby fish in Barangay Capantolan in Sual town. Another man from Barangay Sabangan here died, also after eating the fish last year.

The victims all suffered numbness in the tongue, lips and limbs 30 minutes to an hour after eating the fish. *Gabriel Cardinoza, Inquirer Northern Luzon*

Aetas resist plan to build golf course on their land

SUBIC BAY FREEPORT—AT LEAST 69 out of 92 Aeta in Pastolan on the Hermosa, Bataan side of this freeport have opposed the plan of South Korean shipbuilding firm Hanjin to construct a golf course within their 4,335-hectare ancestral domain here.

"We, holders of Certificate Ancestral Domain Title (CADT) No. R03-HER-0703 ... are strongly opposing the golf course plan of Hanjin," the Pastolan Tribe Village Livelihood Association Inc. (PTVLAI) said in a letter to Armand Arreza, administrator of the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority.

One of their leaders, Bonifacio Florentino, told the INQUIRER that all their efforts to claim title to the domain, install a water system, organize themselves and improve the area through the assistance of the World Bank would "all go to naught."

Struggle

Anthropologist Rufino Tima, former SBMA consultant for tribal concerns, confirmed the assistance of the World Bank to the Pastolan Aeta.

The Aeta got the CADT in 2002 after lobbying for it for four years since 1998, Florentino said.

According to him, Hanjin intends to develop a 500-hectare golf course that would encroach on 300 hectares within the domain's Barangay Mabiga portions.

These are near the watershed area, he said.

Farming

"We don't want a golf course. That is not a sustainable project. Having a land and farming it have long-term benefits. The next generation would not have land anymore," he said.

The association presented an integrated development program that listed mainly farm-based livelihood projects and eco-tourism plans.

Florentino also said one golf course within the domain, located at Binictican, was enough. This, he said, had already polluted the rivers within the domain.

He accused Hanjin of dividing the tribe by dealing with another group of Aeta led by a non-Aeta village chief. "When the Americans were here, they did not bother us," Florentino recalled.

Interviewed by phone, Arreza confirmed Hanjin's plan to build the golf course at the base of the Mt. Sta. Rita station.

He described the area as "largely grasslands, some timberland without a watershed."

Florentino said the Aeta have planted vegetable crops and tree seedlings in the disputed area.

According to Arreza, the World Bank helped in obtaining the CADT, not in protecting the watershed.

No approval

Hanjin, he said, has consulted with the National Commission for Indigenous Peoples and with a 10-person committee that the Aeta have organized to address their concerns related to the golf course project.

Arreza said the SBMA has not yet approved the golf course project. Consultations, he added, are ongoing.

The Aetas, he went on, should settle the conflict among themselves.

A Hanjin document showed that the South Korean company has proposed to put 10 percent of the 50-year lease payment to a community development fund, which will be used for livelihood, health, infrastructure, education and other priority projects of a tribal council to be created for the purpose of the project.

Hanjin assured it would conduct an environmental impact study, involve Aeta in the multipartite monitoring team, provide them training and hire those who are qualified to work in the project. *Tonette Orejas, Inquirer Central Luzon*

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Isabela folk ask: What's real score in polls?

ROXAS, ISABELA—WHAT'S THE real score? Isabelinos want to know who really won in the gubernatorial and vice gubernatorial races in the province.

Merlinda Taganas, municipal registrar, said residents have been asking her office when the Commission on Elections would proclaim the winners in the races here.

Gideon Ventura, a college instructor at the St. Ferdinand College in Ilagan town, said his students were wondering who would serve as acting governor since the case had not been settled yet.

"The voters have the right to know the proclaimed winners soon. The Comelec officials are too slow in resolving the case. The delay has compromised the sovereign will of the voters," he said.

Melchor Teel, an electrician, said solving the election controversy would pave the way for economic development of the province.

"I hope that losing candidates must learn to accept defeat graciously," he said.

Vice Gov. Ramon Reyes, who defeated three-term Mayor Mercedes Uy, said the election protest would be over "very soon."

He said the alleged ghost precinct in Angadanan town cited by his opponent had been proven untrue as it was clustered into another precinct, as certified by the election officer there.

Assuming that he would give up his votes in the questioned precinct, this would not negate his 50,000-vote margin over Uy, he said.

Reelectionist Gov. Maria Gracia Cielo Padaca was willing to allow Reyes to be proclaimed first in case the petition by her rival Benjamin Dy questioning election returns from five Isabela towns was not resolved early, the vice governor said.

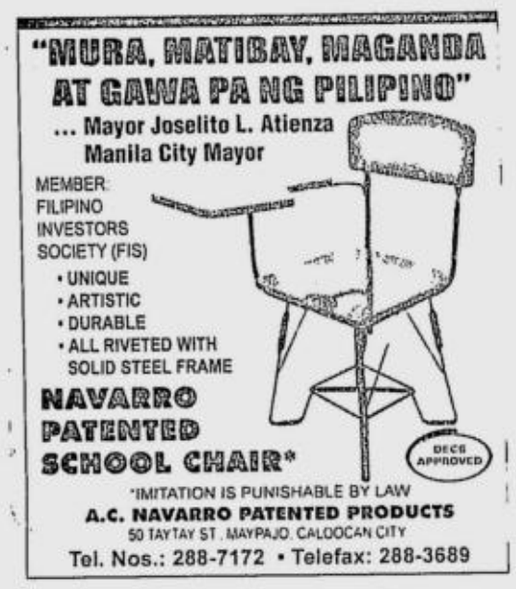
Latest reports said the Comelec's second division has ordered the municipal board of canvassers in four towns to proceed with the canvassing of the remaining questioned election returns to pave the way for the provincial canvassing board to proclaim the gubernatorial and vice gubernatorial winners.

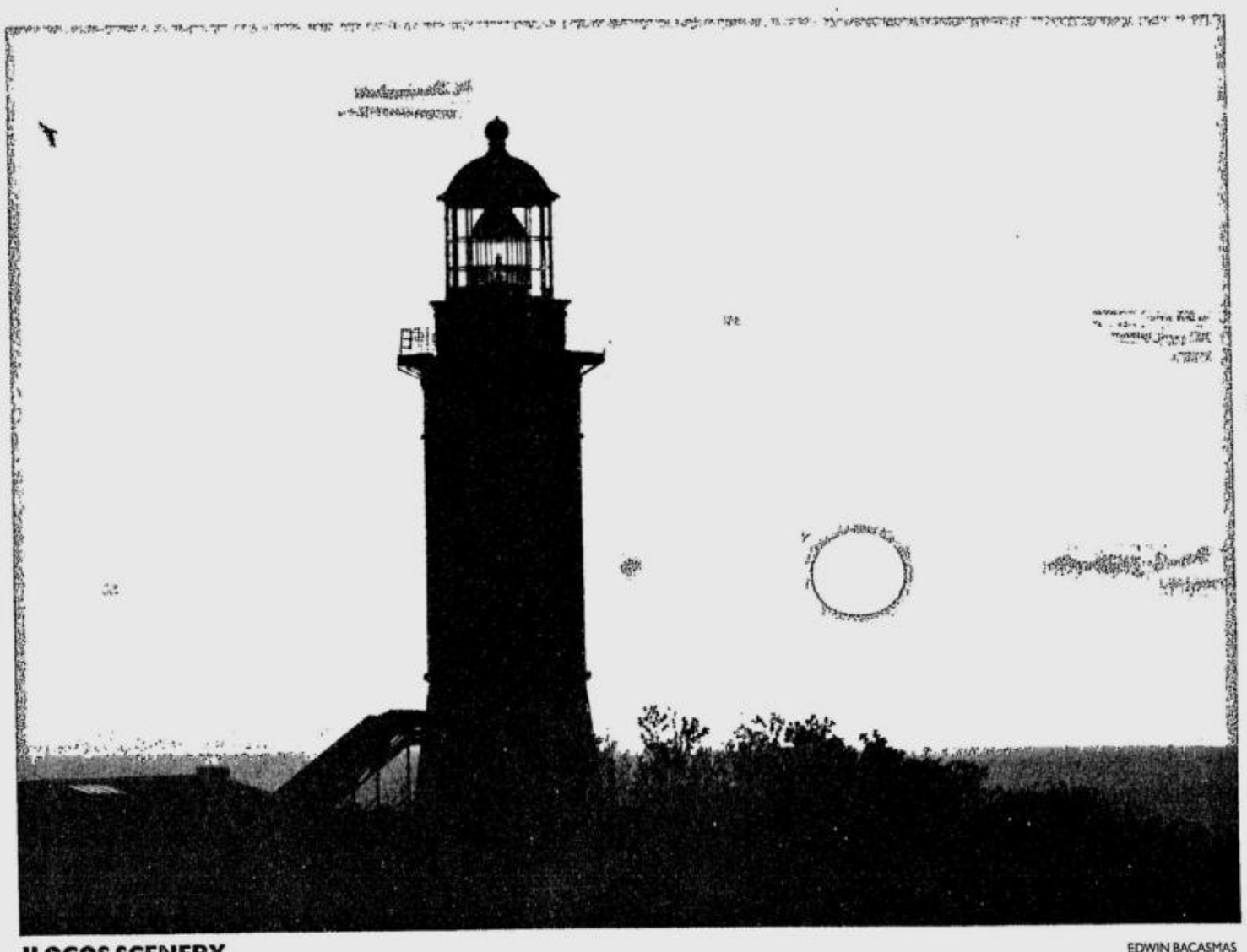
The June 4 decision has rejected Dy's petition to exclude alleged questionable election returns from Tumauini, Delfin Albano, Sto. Tomas and Cordon towns.

The order to MBOC, however, did not include Ilagan, which has 109 contested election returns.

Padaca earlier claimed she won over her opponent by more than 12,000 votes. She denied Dy's allegations that her camp had resorted to cheating.

Dy said, however, that vote manipulations allegedly by Padaca's allies had been "massive" and that a failure of elections should have been declared. *Villamor Visaya Jr., Inquirer Northern Luzon*





ILOCOS SCENERY
A light house in Burgos, Ilocos Norte is silhouetted as the sun sets in the town. EDWIN BACASMAS

2 Red groups declare split, cling to name

By Carla P. Gomez
Inquirer Visayas

BACOLOD CITY—TWO FACTIONS of a communist rebel group operating in Negros and Panay have formalized their split but have kept on using the same name, Rebolusyonaryong Partido ng Manggagawa-Pilipinas (RPM-P).

Stephen Paduano, alias Carapali Lualhati, a leader of one faction, said RPM-P members held a "congress" somewhere in Negros Occidental during the weekend and unanimously approved the expulsion of Nilo de la Cruz as party chair and eight other Central Committee members.

De la Cruz had earlier announced the ouster of Paduano as head of the group's armed wing, Revolutionary Proletarian Army-Alex Boncayao Brigade (RPA-ABB).

The RPM-P and the RPA-ABB were formed by rebels who broke away from the mainstream Communist Party of the Philippines-New People's Army in 1997 due to ideological differences. They forged a peace agreement with the government in 2001.

'Security reasons'

Paduano said the RPM-P was now chaired by one Fidel Nava. He refused to give details on Nava's identity for "security reasons."

Paduano said he had remained party vice chair and national commander of the RPA-ABB.

Last week, De la Cruz said Paduano and two other party leaders—Veronica Tabara, secretary general, and Ariel Sabandar, head of the Mindanao command—were expelled from the movement in April during a party plenum.

But the three countered that the majority of party members had remained with them and that the only "legitimate way" to expel party leaders is through a party congress.

Congress

In a statement on Wednesday, Paduano said "the whole leadership of the RPA-ABB" attended the RPM-P congress.

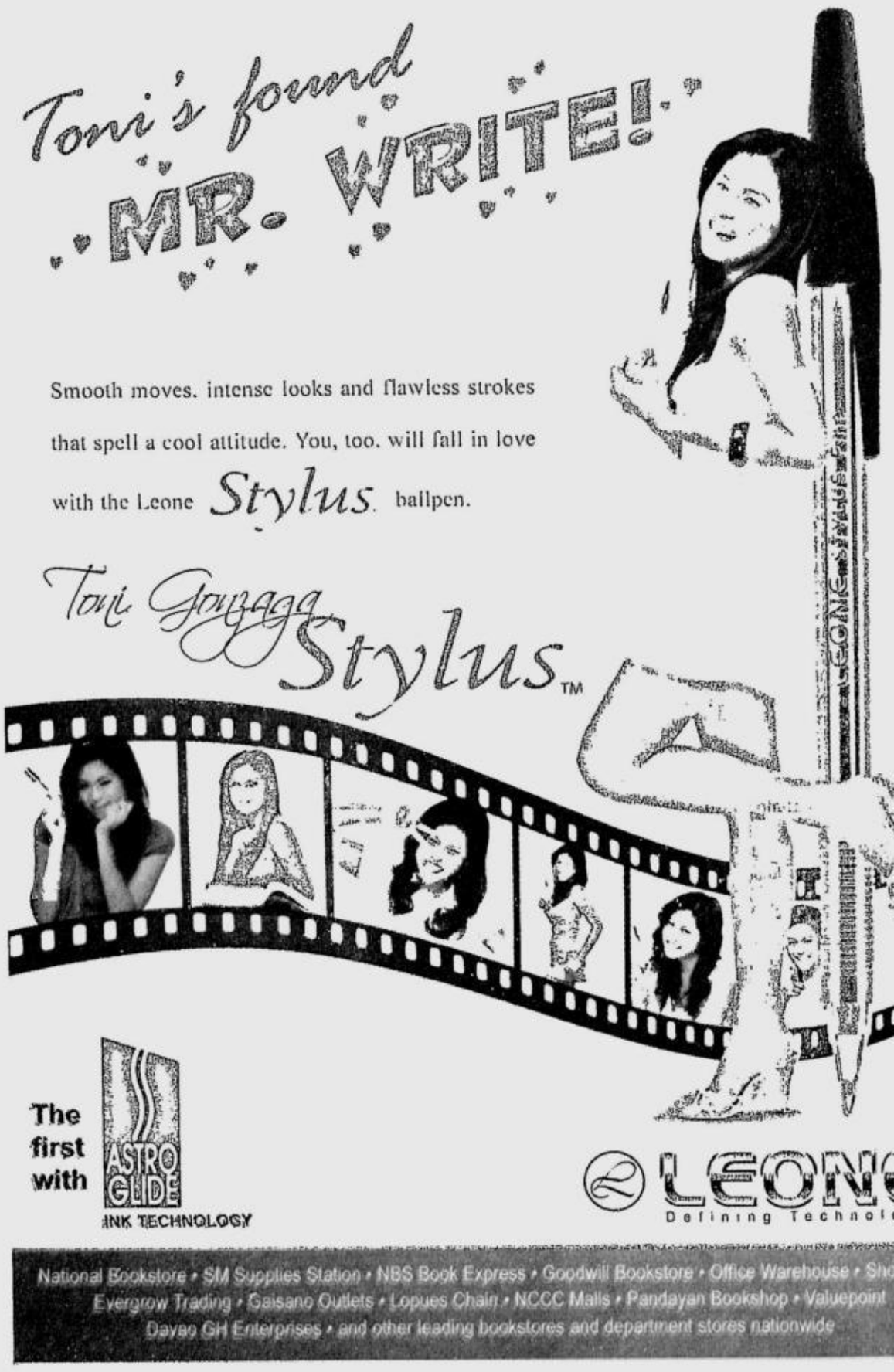
De la Cruz, in a telephone interview, insisted that only the Central Committee could convene a congress.

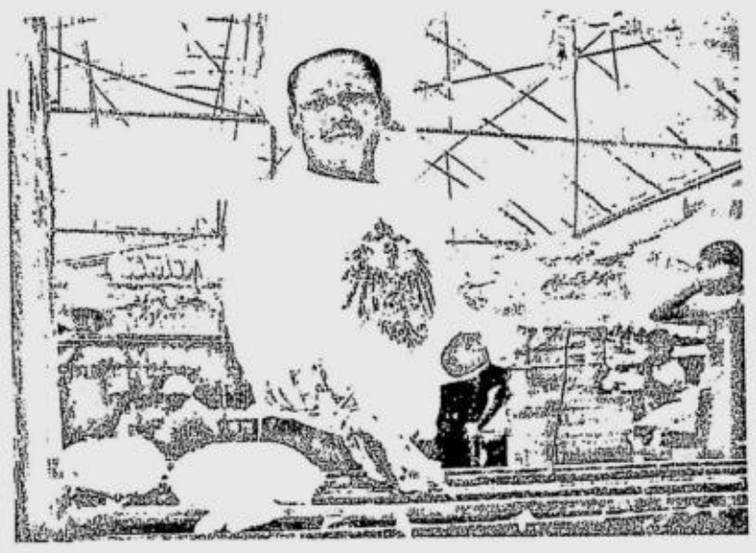
"As long as they are using the name of the RPM-P, they are supposed to act in accordance with the constitution and other established rules in the processes of the RPM-P. If not, all their actions are illegal and fake, and, therefore, null and void," he said.

He said he had remained chair of the RPM-P.

But Paduano said the majority of the organization's members from around the country called for the congress and sent their elected representatives to the Negros Occidental meeting. They declared a total loss of confidence in De la Cruz and his associates, he said.

Paduano said it was De la Cruz who was the fake chairman because he was expelled and had a very small number of followers from Luzon.





GUIMARAS residents won't let the oil spill that ruined their livelihood keep them down. Last May, they held a fish festival to dramatize their struggle to recover from the oil spill's effects. ARNOLD ALMACEN/INQUIRER VISAYAS

Oil spill fund exec cries foul over link to elections

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
Inquirer Visayas

ILOILO CITY—THE HEAD OF THE INTER-governmental organization which provides compensation to oil spill victims has lamented allegations that their organization allowed itself to be used by politicians during the election period in the payment of claims for victims of the oil spill.

International Oil Pollution Compensation (IOPC) Fund Director Willem Oosterveen said it was unfortunate that the final stages of the payment had become the "object of political canvassing."

Oosterveen made the statement in a letter dated May 9 to Hugh Bayley, a member of the United Kingdom's House of Commons.

Bayley had called the IOPC's attention to the alleged irregularities after he received an e-mail from Iloilo Rep. Janette Garin.

In her e-mail, a copy of which was furnished to the Philippine government with Oosterveen's letter, Garin alleged that fraudulent claims were made which had no verification aside from the recommendation of politicians.

She identified the politicians as Miag-ao town Mayor Gerardo Flores, whom Garin defeated in last month's elections, Dumangas Mayor Rolando Distura and provincial board member Niel Tupas Jr.

She also accused IOPC personnel of allowing the alleged scam to happen because of "wanton laziness" in verifying the claims and of tolerating "barbaric political gimmickry."

Oosterveen refuted Garin's allegations.

"Some of my colleagues in the Fund Secretariat have worked tirelessly to have these claims assessed and to make the payments as adequately and quickly as possible, even giving up their Christmas holidays in order to alleviate the hardship of those most seriously affected," he said in his letter.

He said they have no facts to substantiate the allegations but would not hesitate to stop or suspend the payments if they have proof.

The IOPC official defended the process in the processing and verification of claims of oil spill victims which requires the claimants to submit a duly filled up claim form signed by five officials (barangay captain, local fisheries officer, municipal mayor, governor or congressman).

"It's the Fund's view that process adopted has worked extremely well, although it was recognized at the outset that a small number of people who were not bonafide fisherfolk might get through the system," said Oosterveen.

He said they have adopted "flexible approach" different from the one they used in other oil spill incidents because a very large number of fishermen who operate on subsistence, or semi-commercial basis, could not provide documentary evidence to prove their losses.

He admitted the process was "not perfect but (was) the most appropriate way of ensuring that compensation was paid to bonafide fisherfolk."

GMA: Let's reconcile, move nation forward

From page A1

impeachment complaints against Ms Arroyo as the most notable accomplishments of the House under his leadership in the 13th Congress.

The other measures that De Venecia mentioned were the Bio-Ethanol Fuel Act which, he said, has lessened the Philippines' dependence on fossil fuels, the antiterrorism law or the Human Security Act, and the repeal of the Death Penalty Law.

He did not mention the House's failure to pass the Cheap Medicines Bill and the Human Rights Compensation Bill during its closing session this week. The second bill needed only the House's approval to pass Congress, be ready for the President's signature and become law.

'United behind democracy'

Although only two of her senatorial candidates had made it to the Top 12 so far, Ms Arroyo said she believed "the Filipino people have united behind democracy."

In a veiled message to the new Senate that would be dominated by her critics, she said: "The campaign has had its contentious moments. But let us be magnanimous, win or lose. The interest of the people dictates that we must close all chapters of strife and recrimination."

Ms Arroyo lauded the voters who trooped to the polls to cast their ballots and commended the Commission on Elections and its deputized agencies for protecting the people's right of suffrage.

"Our commendations extend particularly to our teachers whose heroism and dedication are renowned in times like this, and the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the Philippine National Police," she said, adding:

"All the institutions that helped the people safeguard the vote—religious, civic, professional—likewise deserve the gratitude of our nation."

She also congratulated the winners in the elections and those still to be proclaimed: "We thank all the candidates of whatever party or political persuasion who fought hard and well to win the vote."

'Good to be home'

The President, who went straight to the Batasan complex after arriving from a visit to two booming business hubs, China, said she felt at home in the chamber populated by her political allies.

"We come home straight to Congress with a plan to consolidate the nation in the post-election period," she said.

"The overwhelming victory of our coalition in Congress and in the local governments is a continuing mandate of reform, unity, more work and less politics, looking forward and leaving behind the contentious past."

Ms Arroyo said she looked forward to the continuing support of Congress.

"It is good to be home and among allies resolved to work together to lift everyone up and make sure no one is left behind. Our work must be a national enterprise where no one loses and everybody wins," she said.

Ms Arroyo also heaped praise on the House, describing it as "the most powerful Philippine legislature in terms of numbers, talent and, with God's grace, unity."

"We are confident you will use the power bestowed upon you to take us a significant step forward every day in the next three years, embracing a future of peace, solidarity, stability and prosperity. Let the ideas that this Congress has stood for in a century—freedom, liberty and equality—light our path forward," she said.

She thanked the 13th Congress for passing reforms that, she said, stabilized the national budget and government spending and increased revenue.

"The Filipino masses are carving the way out of the social margins through the vision and will of patriotic political leaders such as the leaders in this great hall of Congress," the President said.

"As we welcome the 14th Congress during this celebration, let us write another chapter of our proud history—by writing off gridlock, by writing off terror, by writing off destitution. It is our season time of hope and unity. We pray that this will be the advent of a new Filipino nation in the palm of the Lord."

'Greatest achievement'

In his speech, De Venecia said that "through the EVAT and the increase in specific taxes on alcohol and tobacco products, we've been able to put our financial house in order."

"This, I believe, is the greatest achievement of this House in this 13th Congress," he declared. "We achieved an economic breakthrough by creating new streams of revenue—while encouraging enhanced efficiency in tax collection through the Attrition Act and the grant of a one-time tax amnesty," he said.

De Venecia said the performance of the chamber was something to be proud of because it passed on third reading 1,035 bills.

"By all indications, this is a record harvest of legislation. And of these, 109 have become law," he said.

Standing its ground

He took a swipe at the senators, saying 966 bills were pending in the Senate and would have to go through the legislative process again if they were to be refiled in the next Congress.

On the political front, De Venecia said it was to the House's credit that it dismissed the impeachment complaints against Ms Arroyo, warding off attempts "to bring down an administration on insubstantial evidence."

"Again and again, our House would be tested in the matter of the President's impeachment—on whether the charges against her are true or not—and each time we stood our ground," he said, adding:

"Twice did we reject the attempt to bring down an administration on insubstantial evidence based on the inflamed emotions of political partisans and the public's confusion.

"The doomsayers keep trying to bring down government by picturing it as an animal to be derided, loathed and feared."

De Venecia said the House under his leadership made sure the Arroyo administration had the latitude to accomplish its tasks as a government and give the people "reason to hope."

"In this Congress, we did our best to rise above the din of debate and discussion. We put our heads together and came up with solutions to give the administration the leeway it needed to do its job well—to prevent conflict and crisis—and ultimately to give people reason to hope," he said.

'Political openness'

And, according to De Venecia, the House gave those with serious allegations of electoral fraud against Ms Arroyo a venue for their voice to be heard.

It was in 2005 that five House committees conducted a joint inquiry on the tapes of purported conversations between Ms Arroyo and then Election Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano, on alleged fraud in the 2004 presidential election.

Said De Venecia: "We granted the use of the plenary hall for the hearings, gave their deliberations full media coverage, and even allowed the controversial tapes to be played—making the issue a landmark event in political openness in our legislative history."

But all was not victory, De Venecia said. The Supreme Court's thumbing down of his Charter change proposals through a constituent assembly, he said, was a setback to his proposed "roadmap to the future" via an alternative to the presidential system.

Nevertheless, he said, "we in this House will continue to seek constitutional remedies for our endemic political infirmities—the worst of them being the periodic gridlocks caused by the rivalries among the branches of government."

"We believe the lasting remedy lies in a shift from the presidential to the parliamentary system," he said.

Praise...

The "Centennial Session of Congress" drew praise from heads and representatives of parliaments from Europe, Middle East, Latin America and Asia. Each was allotted about five minutes for individual messages.

Indonesian Speaker Agung Laksono commended the Filipino legislators' "consistency in fighting for people's democracy and sovereignty."

"It is clear that the life of democracy in the Philippines is one of the most vibrant in the Asean region," he said, on top of tough talk on the political situation in Burma (Myanmar) and Iraq.

Laksono urged Burma's military government to "return to the practice of democracy" and release democratic movement leader Aung San Suu Kyi. He also condemned the "illegal military occupation" of Iraq and called for an immediate withdrawal of foreign troops there.

Special envoy Liu Minzu, representing Wu Bangguo, chair of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of China, spoke of the "good relations" between China and the Philippines.

Also present were leaders of the parliaments of Finland, Iran, Malaysia, Russia, Mexico and Thailand, and the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the parliament of Latin America.

...And brickbats

But in De Venecia's own backyard, not everyone was happy with the centennial celebration.

Parañaque Rep. Roilo Golez earlier questioned the timing of the festivity, raising questions during plenary over when the Philippine parliament actually began. He asked why Congress was celebrating 100 years when its official seal carried the year "1987."

Golez also inquired if the celebration had the blessing of the National Historical Institute, considering that it appeared to have disregarded the Malolos Congress of 1898.

Bayan Muna Rep. Teodoro Casiño said the House leadership's reference to the US-created Philippine Assembly of 1907—and not the Malolos Congress—was "a testament to the colonial mind-set that has characterized the institution for the last century."

"From 1907 till this day, Congress' role has been to protect narrow foreign and elite interests," Casiño said in a statement. "It is a House of big landlords, warlords, political dynasties, and politicians under the payroll of big business interests."

Isafp chief to CHR: Will attend if I'm available . . .

From page A1

Bangit explained that previous engagements had required his attention, which was why, he said, he had sent a lawyer from the Isafp to represent him at the hearings.

He said he had already met with Burgos' mother, Edita, and that he had assured her of his office's cooperation in the inquiry.

But when asked if he would attend the next CHR hearing, Bangit said: "I will, if I'm available."

High suspicion

Even as the CHR was looking into the Burgos case, Gilbert Rey Cardeño, the chair of the militant party-list group Bayan Muna in South Cotabato, was taken at gunpoint by unidentified men late on Wednesday.

According to South Cotabato Gov. Daisy Avance-Fuentes, the manner of Cardeño's abduction showed that it was "not [for] personal reasons."

"There is high suspicion that government troops were behind the abduction," the governor said yesterday over Radio Mindanao Network in Koronadal City.

Fuentes said that if the suspicion would be proven true, "we will not tolerate it even if Cardeño belongs to the Left."

"They must free Cardeño or else the entire province would become their enemy. We need to know who's holding him and their location," she said.

Fuentes also said she was to meet with representatives of civil society and church groups, as well as political parties, so a collective stand could be taken on the issue.

Cardeño, 27, is also the regional coordinator of Bayan Muna in Central Mindanao.

PNP jacket

Supt. Roberto Kiunisala, South Cotabato police director, told the INQUIRER that one of Cardeño's abductors was wearing "a jacket with Philippine National Police markings."

He said the man was described as weighing between 70 and 75 kilos, dark-complexioned, with clean-cut straight hair.

Kiunisala said that an artist's sketch of the man had been produced, and that police had launched "a search operation to recover Cardeño."

This was confirmed in a statement by Director Geary Barias, chief of the PNP Directorate for Investigation and Detective Management and of PNP Task Force Usig, a special unit formed to look into the disappearance and killing of leftist activists.

"All police provincial offices in Region 12 (Central Mindanao) under Chief Supt. Felizardo Serapio Jr. have been alerted to possibly intercept the suspected abductors and rescue Cardeño," Barias said in the statement issued in Manila.

He said that members of the South Cotabato police under Kiunisala were taking part in the search, and that the Koronadal Police under Supt. Florendo Quidilla was conducting "a continuous investigation to establish the motive" behind the abduction.

EU experts coming

Cardeño's wife, Sheila May, attributed her husband's disappearance to President Macapagal-Arroyo's counterinsurgency campaign.

In a message to the President, Sheila May said: "As a wife and mother, how will you feel when your husband is taken from you? Madam, please stop the killing of people who are telling the truth and helping other people."

Other members of Bayan Muna and allied groups said they would search for Cardeño in the police and military camps in Central Mindanao.

Emily Lopez, secretary general of the human rights group Karapatan in South Cotabato and Sultan Kudarat, said the CHR had provided her and her colleagues a "pass" for "camp-hopping."

The Moro Islamic Liberation Front, through its spokesperson Eid Kabalu, said that "whoever was behind the abduction, whether government troops, civilians or other groups, we are against it and we condemn it."

"If he has done anything wrong, it should be settled in the proper court," Kabalu said.

Cardeño's abduction occurred 12 days before the scheduled arrival of experts from the European Union for a 10-day visit to look into the assistance needed by the Philippines to resolve the political killings and forced disappearances.

The team is composed of three officials from the Brussels-based European Commission and four or five police officers and technical and human rights experts from EU countries.

19 in S. Mindanao

Cardeño's abduction was the latest in the wave of attacks against leftist activists.

In Southern Mindanao alone, 19 abductions have been recorded since 2001. Government agents were found to have been involved in a number of the cases.

Among these was the November 2004 disappearance of Rahman Camili, a member of the party-list group Suara Bangsamoro. His abductors were later identified as operatives of the Military Intelligence Group (MIG).

Days after Camili's disappearance, Camp Aguinaldo officials presented him to reporters as a suspect in the 2003 Davao bombings.

A court later ordered Camili's release for lack of evidence.

But on Dec. 18, 2006, Camili was abducted again. He remains missing to this day.

On Nov. 4, 2006, Mary Bernadette Solitario and Lourelie Naiz were forcibly taken by members of the 27th and 39th Infantry Battalions in Barangay Banayal in Tulunan, North Cotabato.

The two women, both community teachers of the Davao City-based nongovernment organization Disaster Response Center Inc. (Direct), were released a day later.

They said they had been tortured into confessing they were communist rebels.

Raunil Mortejo, chair of Anakbayan in Davao City, was also forcibly taken by four masked men in Juna Subdivision on March 17, 2006. He was released after three hours of interrogation.

With reports from Jeoffrey Maitem, Jeffrey M. Tupas, Aquiles Z. Zonio and Edwin O. Fernandez, Inquirer Mindanao; Alcuin Papa in Manila

Pinoy delivers Harvard Law graduation speech

From page A1

Oscar Franklin Tan, 27, earned the rare honor of delivering the commencement address in behalf of some 700 American and foreign graduates of the Harvard Law School.

Adel Tamano, spokesperson of the Genuine Opposition ticket in the recent senatorial elections, served as commencement speaker at Harvard Law in 2005.

The 2005 law alumnus of the University of the Philippines pursued a master's degree at the exalted academy in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Tan was to deliver the commencement address on June 7.

Tan is an associate at the Angara, Abello, Concepcion, Regala and Cruz law office. His father, Edmundo L. Tan, is a managing partner at the Tan Acut & Lopez law firm, while his mother, Dr. Jesusa Barcelona Tan, is a dermatologist.

His name was added to the growing list of Filipino legal luminaries who attended Harvard, some of whom went on to shape the country's history. They include former Senators Jovito Salonga and Rene Saguisag; Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile, Representatives Teddy Boy Locsin and Sonny Angara, former Press Secretary Ricardo Puno, former Solicitor General Estelito Mendoza, former Environment Secretary Fulgencio Factoran, Ateneo Law Dean Cesar Villanueva, and INQUIRER columnist and former UP Law Dean Raul Pangalangan, and the latter's wife Elizabeth Aguiling-Pangalangan.

Crossing cultural barriers

Tan said he apparently earned the distinction not by academic prowess alone. "I feel that I was selected to speak because I am able to touch base with all my classmates and cross all cultural barriers," Tan said yesterday, in reply to e-mailed questions from the INQUIRER.

"This does not just come naturally when one is in an international community. For example, some Europeans can be more aggressive and direct culturally, while some Asians can be less direct and be uncomfortable with their English capability."

"I made it my priority to get to know each and every one of my interesting classmates, and let them know I was open to whatever they had to say. In this way, I was perceived as being able to best represent the class," he said.

"For excellence alone is never enough," he explained, a mind-set imprinted on him at Harvard where, unlike in Philippine law schools, the obsession over good grades and bar exam results are considered "juvenile" pursuits.

He recalled that awards were recently handed out to American law students at Harvard—not for academic achievements but for public service, like participation in legal aid programs.

Respect for leadership

"Students here respect not grades," he said, but "leadership," particularly in shaping the school journal, the Harvard Law Review.

US presidential contender Barack Obama, for instance, caught the attention of the national media way back when he became the first African-American president of the HLR.

Legal writing is one area where Tan left his biggest mark as a UP law student. He racked up 17 writing prizes, mainly for term papers and analyses of Supreme Court decisions.

He went on to chair the prestigious Philippine Law Journal.

'Wine in the River'

In the draft of his speech sent to the INQUIRER, Tan delved no more into stiff legal discourse but rather reveled in the cultural cornucopia that made up his Harvard batch, where up to 60 nationalities were represented. The speech partly read:

"A Saudi Arabian reminded me that you can fry eggs on a sidewalk in Riyadh. An Italian gave me tips on women because Italian men are the world's greatest lovers, with the disclaimer that their style does not work on American women. A Malaysian was asked to explain the religious significance of the color of her *hijab* or headscarf. She would answer: It had to match her blouse.

"On New Year's Eve, a Belarusian handed me a glass of vodka, but scolded me when I began to sip it. Sipping, he emphasized, was not the Slavic way. I shared a Frenchman's champagne, a Peruvian's pisco sour, a Costa Rican's piña colada, a Brazilian's caipirinha, a Mexican's tequila and a Japanese's sake.

"And apologies to the Germans, but I learned how even weak American beer enlivens an evening when you drink it with the Irish."

'Citizens of the world'

In a piece he titled "Like Wine in the River, Like Citizens of the World," he asked rhetorically: "How do a mere 700 change the world, even with overpriced Harvard diplomas?"

He called on his classmates, the "future leaders" of their respective countries, "to transcend our individual nationalities and affirm that we are citizens of the world."

For regardless of race, color or creed, he said, "our peers in faraway lands face the same frustrations, the same nation-building ordeals, the same sorrows and, ultimately, the same shared joys and triumphs."

Describing himself as a witness to two Philippine people power revolts, Tan acknowledged among his classmates an Afghan lawyer chased out of his country by the Taliban and a Bhutanese princess who "wants to help shape her country's constitution after her father-king voluntarily gave up absolute power."

He also noted how his Chinese classmates have "come to grips" with the Tiananmen Square crackdown, and how an Iranian, upon meeting the speechwriter of US President George W. Bush, introduced himself by saying: "Hi! I'm from an Axis of Evil country."

Securities Law

After Harvard, he hopes to build a career in Securities Law and Constitutional Law (the specializations he took up there), Tan said in the e-mailed interview, adding:

"I hope to be in a position to influence our economic institutions' development, and I learned so much here about how American companies are policed and how investor rights are protected. So many people agitate for political change, but I feel that we also need highly technical people able to act as midwives for the legal institutions that underpin our economy."

Filipinos have "a beautiful Constitution," he said, which unfortunately remains barely appreciated or understood by the common citizen.

"For example, when the Jose Pidal scandal broke out, so-called legal experts questioned whether a 'right to privacy' existed in the media, even though this is taught to UP Law freshmen during their first week of class," he said.

But underlying all these lofty plans—now all within his reach, thanks to his "overprized Harvard diploma"—is a rather humble mission for someone who got his headstart in law at a state university like UP.

"Our studies were paid for by nameless poor farmers and fishermen, and I hope to one day pay my dues," Tan said.

US awards P460 million to 4 ex-Sayyaf members

From page A1

September last year on Jolo Island, and his successor, Sulaiman, who was killed in January also on Jolo.

More than 7,000 Filipino soldiers, backed by US military surveillance and other noncombatant assistance, have been waging an offensive on Jolo since August last year.

During the ceremony, however, Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon said it was the support given by the people to the AFP that had turned the tide of battle against the Abu Sayyaf.

"We got Janjalani and Sulaiman not because of Oplan Ultimatum but because of the help of the people," Esperon said in reference to the military operation launched last year on the strife-torn island of Jolo, the bastion of the Abu Sayyaf bandits who have been linked to the al-Qaida terrorist network.

Witness protection program

"We can see that the local people are fed up with violence, crimes and abuses ... We must say enough is enough," he added.

Esperon said the four informers would be placed under the government's witness protection program. Three of the informers had opted to be relocated outside the tiny island of Jolo for safety reasons.

"One of them was brave enough to stay behind with his family but we're committed to provide him adequate security," he told reporters.

Brig. Gen. Juancho Sabban, Western Mindanao Command deputy chief, said two of the informers led soldiers to Janjalani's grave in December last year. The Abu Sayyaf chieftain was mortally wounded in a gun battle three months earlier. In January, DNA tests conducted by the US government confirmed that the decomposing remains in the grave were those of Janjalani.

Hunt continues

The two other informers helped troops track down Sulaiman, the Abu Sayyaf spokesperson also known as "the engineer."

Esperon said the hunt continued for other Abu Sayyaf commanders and two top Indonesian militants who are wanted for their alleged role in the 2002 nightclub bombings that killed 202 people on Indonesia's Bali island.

Dulmatin and Umar Patek are key operatives of the Jemaah Islamiyah, which aims to set up an Islamic state across large parts of Southeast Asia.

Washington has offered a $10-million reward for Dulmatin's capture and $1 million for Patek.

Kenney appealed to Filipinos with information about militants to come forward.

"These people remain as serious threats to each and every one of us," she said on local radio. "Help us in neutralizing them before they can inflict harm on us."

With reports from Cynthia D. Balana in Manila; Edwin O. Fernandez, Inquirer Mindanao; AP; AFP; and Reuters

Palace cancels bid results for P1.3B in textbooks

From page A1

have a legal basis," he said, calling on disgruntled textbook suppliers and printers to come out in the open and lodge formal complaints.

Lapus lamented that too much focus had been given to the DepEd when "operators are all the same in all government procurements. Maybe the DepEd is their favorite punching bag because it's so huge. If you really want to look at the imperfections, you'll never run out of them ... in the biggest department in government."

Lapus was reacting to the alleged anomalous bidding process for the P800-million loan from the World Bank for the publication of 17.5 million textbooks and teaching manuals for public elementary and high schools that were intended to be used last school year.

Losing bidders charged that the bidding process was rigged and that there was questionable intervention by the World Bank to resolve issues that included conflict of interest among the major bidders and several of their "dummy" companies.

Contracts were eventually awarded to Vibal and Watana Phanit, among others, despite a pending petition in the Supreme Court lodged by two bidders that felt they had been cheated.

Delays in procurement

Because of the lawsuits, only 11.9 million textbooks and teaching manuals worth more than P500 million for Grades 1 to 5 were published and distributed for use this school year.

Documents obtained by the INQUIRER, supported by testimonial evidence, pointed to the existence of the cartel at the DepEd which had allegedly cornered the lion's share of the textbook contracts since the Estrada administration.

But technocrats who joined the Arroyo administration before it was wracked by dissension in the aftermath of the "Hello Garci" controversy had in fact succeeded in restricting the activities of the purported cartel, according to one former DepEd official who spoke on condition of anonymity.

This official said that the World Bank had resolved the conflict of interest issue by pointing out that while there were interlocking companies involved they were bidding on different sets of textbooks—for example, one for elementary and the other for secondary texts—and that there was no collusion on pricing and other standards among the bidders.

The official also pointed out that for several years before the 2005 dissension hit the Arroyo Cabinet over charges that the President stole the 2004 election, the procurement process had been aboveboard.

Lapus told the INQUIRER that he could not just ban the Vibal group outright from participating in the May 28 bidding without a ruling by a competent authority.

'Virtual monopoly'

According to lawyer Harry Roque, instead of being banned for failure to rectify the errors in the previous textbooks it had printed, the Vibal Group—Vibal Publishing House and its sister companies—again won the bidding last May 28 for the printing of English, Science and Mathematics textbooks for elementary and secondary students.

Roque, a lawyer for Kolonwel, a relatively new textbook supplier, said he was dismayed that despite a pending issue before the Supreme Court questioning the "virtual monopoly of the Vibal Group" in winning another World Bank-funded textbook project last year, it was Vibal that was again declared the winner.

"It's as if only Vibal is qualified to supply these World Bank-funded textbooks," said Roque in a phone interview.

"This is alarming because we are supposed to offer the students not only the best buys but also the best textbooks, and yet despite everything that has been brought out—from errors in these textbooks to possible violations of law—(DepEd) insists only on one client," he said. "One wonders what kind of influence Vibal has over DepEd and why," said Roque.

The INQUIRER attempted but could not get immediate comment from Vibal.

Lapus said he would study the legality of the allegations against Vibal.

'Sure-footed'

"You know, people will not take things sitting down. They will go to court. We have to be sure-footed when we do that," he said.

In the past, Vibal had published textbooks replete with "major historical, technical, substantive, grammatical errors and discrepancies," according to Antonio Calipjo Go, academic supervisor of the little-known Marian School.

But Lapus said Vibal had already issued errata inserted in each of the affected textbooks, and that after an evaluation, "we found not so many factual errors," which "did not warrant a recall of textbooks."

"If we keep on delaying the publication of textbooks, millions of kids will suffer. As long as the price is good, quality is good, only a few errors, we can tolerate that. But we will review if the mistake is perennial," Lapus said.

Rocking the boat

Lapus said the "present dispensation is making improvements, but is faced with constraints."

"We lack the flexibility inherent in the private sector, such as the power to easily fire erring employees," said Lapus, known in the private and political spheres as a "crisis manager."

"There are certain things that are impossible to change. What is important is we're attempting to rock the boat. We are trying a new system. I can only improve the system," said Lapus.

More committees

Lapus then enumerated that reforms he had instituted in the procurement side such as identifying the "areas of weakness," separating the bidding process for content evaluation, and printing and delivery, creating three bids and awards committees, thus erasing the monopoly of one committee, and multilevel evaluation of the final copies of textbooks.

In the past, he said, the bidding was "lump sum," so that only bidders which passed the content evaluation and also showed capacity to print and deliver textbooks could win biddings.

"Subjectivity comes in. What we did was to separate the processes of first, content evaluation, then second, printing and delivery," he said. He pointed out that he had also included the delivery aspect because most of the textbooks end up rotting in warehouses because of lack of an effective delivery system in the past.

Big improvements

Lapus said the universal procurement under the World Bank also led to big improvements in the system—the prices of textbooks went down by 50 percent while the quality of the paper improved.

"So theoretically, there's a big improvement. In any procurement, your main concern is price, quality and delivery in any general procurement," he said, believing that multilayered bidding "widened the playing field bid."

Textbook authors in awe ...

From page A1

order to make martial law appear benign and benevolent, students will get the misimpression that its imposition was, after all, justified and necessary. By glorifying and extolling Marcos' spectacular aspirations, the authors completely disregarded his legacy of penumbral accomplishments and aborted intentions. This is color blindness at its worst.

There is something grievously wrong with a Philippine history textbook that has just 11 lines about our national hero Jose Rizal and four pages about Bonifacio and the Katipunan but has 48 pages—almost one-fourth of the entire 220-page book—about Marcos.

The discussion on the tenure of five presidents from Manuel Roxas (1946) to Diosdado Macapagal (1965)—a period of 19 years—was compressed into eight pages, while the 21 years from Cory Aquino's installation in 1986 up to the present was given 10 pages.

The story of the long and bloody struggle for freedom from colonial bondage, beginning with the Reform Movement and ending with the declaration of independence on June 12, 1898, was given only eight pages, while the "Programs of the Government during Martial Law" was accorded a whole chapter of eight pages. Is the second topic more important than the first?

Featured on Page 192 is the book "Tadhana," supposedly written by Marcos, yet you cannot find any picture of any of the books written by Rizal anywhere in this so-called Philippine history textbook.

Rizal, 6; Marcos, 136

What subliminal message has been sent? The name Rizal appeared just six times in the entire book, compared to the 136 times the Marcos name did. Who will the students think did more for our country?

The writers, all teachers and professors of the University of the Philippines (Manila and Diliman), should be the first to know what dubious "legacies" Marcos left us.

Their pronouncements—such as "Macapagal never won again when he ran for president. He failed to solve the problems of the Philippines so Marcos won as president. He inherited the problem of lack of land from Macapagal" and "The foreign debt of the Philippines ballooned because Marcos guaranteed the loans of his businessmen-friends and allies. When they went bankrupt and were unable to pay, their debts were transferred to the government"—show where their hearts lie, what their true colors are.

Textbook authors should never inject their opinions or viewpoints into what they write because these influence, condition and brainwash children's minds, molding these according to their creators' designs, which may not be right, true or good. By adhering too rigidly to the principles of *de mortuis nil nisi bonum*, the writers have reduced themselves to being true-blue, dyed-in-the-wool apologists for Marcos who, though long dead, continue to haunt our nation with the ghosts of his past deeds, both committed and omitted.

Examples

While the book mentioned some negative aspects of Marcos' reign, the following passages which highlight its supposed "positive" points and stand out as exemplars of historical misrepresentation and distortion:

- In the beginning, Marcos' intention for the Philippines was noble. He wanted to help the people. His wish was to uplift the poor from poverty. He also wanted to face and give solutions to the problems which then beset the government. He wished the country total peace.
- At the beginning of martial law, Marcos manifested the desire to carry out reforms. According to him, he wanted a new society.
- The Cultural Center of the Philippines, Manila Film Center, Folk Arts Theater, National Arts Center, School for the Arts, Lung Center and the Nutrition Center of the Philippines were all built during martial law.
- After establishing the New Society, Marcos channeled government resources toward developing nationalism among the people, national identity, national unity, democracy and social justice. In this way, there will be a society wherein citizens are pro-people, pro-God and pro-country.
- Introduction to Lesson 22 (Programs of Government during Martial Law): Marcos announced that it was his desire to change the old society which was full of anomalies, evil, chaos, lack of discipline, low morality in the area of public service and disagreement between the militant citizenry and the military.

Lies with color of truth

- Summary of Lesson 22: Marcos wanted to change the old society which was full of anomalies, evil, chaos, lack of discipline, low morality in the area of public service and disagreement between the militant citizenry and the military.

Statements such as these—lies that have the color of truth—close the students' minds to the reality that there's a world of difference between what people think and what they actually do. Deed and desire are as sundered as east and west.

While Marcos may for a time harbored the purest of intentions (an impossibility when one is "dancing in the glow of power"), the scorecard of history has already shown these meditations to be nothing more than broken vows, shattered promises.

Historical distortions and misrepresentations pose a clear and present danger to schoolchildren because they mislead and miseducate. Children fed and brought up on a constant diet of "false" history, like the Lotus-eaters of old, forget. They miss out on the lessons which history is supposed to be teaching them.

When you prevent children from looking at history impartially and objectively, you tamper with their sense of values, ethics and morality, and muddle their notion of what is right and wrong, good and evil. This is miseducation of the most extreme sort.

Soon, these children will be committing the exact same mistakes their parents did, inflicting chaos and mayhem upon their own children. And then the skies will turn dour and thick black rain will fall yet again on roofs both tine and tile.

Because of our textbooks—shot through with errors, distortions, falsehoods and lies—our children are brought closer and closer to the edge of the precipice. On that field now overgrown with cogon and *talahib*, they will not find Holden Caulfield, for he is long dead and forgotten.

These children of a lesser god are now there, held upon the drop only by the blue bird of hope. At the bottom of the abyss, the maws of mediocrity, ignorance, stupidity, grinding creeping poverty and utter, utter hopelessness await their fall, ready to devour them.

(The writer is academic supervisor of Marian School of Quezon City)

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Bayan Muna et al. file 2 more cases of poll sabotage

By Jerome Aning

MILITANT PARTY-LIST GROUPS BAYAN MUna, Kabataan, Anakpawis, Gabriela and Suara Bangsamoro filed on Wednesday two more cases of electoral sabotage against the provincial canvassers of Kalinga and Zamboanga del Sur, who were allegedly involved in vote-padding and -shaving.

Electoral sabotage is a new election offense defined by Section 42 of Republic Act No. 9369 and Section 58 of Resolution No. 7859 of the Commission on Elections.

Under RA No. 9369, electoral sabotage includes acts committed by canvassers who tamper, increase or decrease the votes received by a candidate in any election. The penalty is life imprisonment.

The complainants detailed cases of vote-padding in several towns, which they said were made by adding extra digits to the number of votes, thus increasing the actual voter turnout.

For Kalinga, the members of the Provincial Boards of Canvassers (PBOC) who were charged were Ricardo Lampac, chair; Bartolome Gamonnac, vice chair; and Cesar Adaoag, secretary.

Bayan Muna counsel Neri Colmenares accused Lampac of tampering with the Certificate of Canvass (CoC) that shaved the votes of Bayan Muna, Anakpawis, Gabriela and Kabataan in Kalinga.

In the provincial CoC, Bayan Muna got 4,310, Anakpawis 1805, Kabataaan 2,331 and Gabriela 2,571 votes in the entire Kalinga.

But in the CoC for Tabuk, Bayan Muna got 9,272, Anakpawis 1,078, Kabataan 2,824, and Gabriela 4,973 votes, respectively.

Disappearance

The complaint also noted that Lampac disappeared for unexplained reasons and that it took five days for the CoC to be delivered to the Comelec sitting as the National Board of Canvassers.

In the other complaint, Zamboanga PBOC chair Ignacio Baya, vice chair Victoriano Gonzaga and secretary Visminda Serrato, as well as tabulators Cleofela Rapisura and Wilfred Pulido were charged with violating the same laws for vote-padding in practically the whole province.

Anakpawis counsel Jobert Pahilga said that in the municipalities of Molave, Tabina, Midsalip, Josefina, Lapuyan, and Ramon Magsaysay, the votes of party-list groups Aangat Tayo, Ahonbayan, ARC, Amin, Alif, A-Smile, Buhay, Coop-Natco, Kakusa and Uni-Mad were padded.

The provincial CoC and Statement of Votes (SoV), when compared with the municipal CoC of each and every municipality, showed a discrepancy of 180,644 votes.

'Will of the people'

Pahilga said Bayan Muna votes were actually padded by about 4,000 in Zamboanga del Sur but the complainants still pursued the case "to punish those who sabotage the will of the people."

The complainants, in their joint statement, said the respondents had the duty not to alter the SoVs without following the procedure outlined by law or Comelec rules.

"They are responsible for ensuring that these SOVs are not tampered with by others," they said.

They said that only members of the canvass committee and its tabulators or members of the PBOCs could have been responsible for the tampering of votes in the SoV of each municipality because the SoV could have only been tampered with when it was under their custody.

The militant party-list groups filed a similar case against the Zamboanga Sibugay PBOC and the Caloocan City BOC late last month.

Colmenares and Pahilga said the padding of votes increased the threshold 2-percent of the votes for the party-list system, making it difficult for the party-list groups, especially the smaller ones such as Suara and Kabataan, to get a seat in the House of Representatives.

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- Support Industries

CONFERENCE (Tentative Topics)

DAY 1: JULY 10, TUESDAY					DAY 2: JULY 11, WEDNESDAY			
OPERATIONS TRACK	PEOPLE TRACK	SOLUTIONS TRACK	CAREER DEVELOPMENT TRACK	CAPTIVES TRACK	OPERATIONS TRACK	PEOPLE TRACK	SOLUTIONS TRACK	CAREER DEVELOPMENT TRACK
Driving operational excellence	Using and applying HR metrics	Collaborating with IT. What every call center manager needs to know	7 habits of highly effective call center managers	How to overhaul your call center: When, why, and how to switch directions	Outbound: What you should know about compliance and dialing	Implementing an employee development program	Agent desktop detox. Simplifying and integrating the agent's numerous tools	Setting up your team
Developing your call center's strategic roadmap	Growing a learning organization	Open source and IP telephony	Seize control of your team - for life	Transforming from a cost center a profit center	Achieving operational efficiencies	HR as a line management function	Securing your information in a fiercely-competitive environment	Developing your career path
Using knowledge management in your center	Understanding the Gen Y career psyche	Extreme makeover: Call center technology management's new look	EQ and Leadership Success	Maximizing your infrastructure: Ways to make the most out of your facility, technology, & other investments	Putting metrics into action	Combating call center attrition	Integrating chat, e-mail, and other non-voice technologies	Self-defense for call center professionals
An introduction to Six Sigma for contact centers	Finding your next 1,000: Alternative recruitment options	Business continuity and disaster recovery planning	How to take your call center career to the top of the heap	Mixing and managing in-house and outsourced customer service services	Raising your call center's profile: How to project your image as the employer of choice	Living the future of HR today	Moving towards integrated workforce optimization	Stress and health management

Topics are subject to change without prior notice.

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'Back to zero' for Marcos victims

By Norman Bordadora

THE LONG WAIT FOR THE P10 billion in compensation for the victims of human rights violations during the Marcos dictatorship just got longer after the 13th Congress failed to pass the Human Rights Compensation Act during its last three session days.

The House of Representatives only needed to ratify the bicameral conference committee report for the bill to pass and be ready for President Macapagal-Arroyo's signature.

The Senate ratified the bicam report before the elections, while the House leadership said the lower chamber would ratify the report in June. The House did not live up to its end of the bargain, however.

"I filed the compensation bill when I first came here in the 11th Congress. This is the farthest it has gone. (It's) on third reading, with only House approval needed for it to pass," Akbayan Rep. Loretta Ann Rosales said.

Back to zero

"Now, we're back to zero," she said.

"(The President) certified the bill as urgent as early as 2004," Rosales said. "To say it was certified as urgent in the 14th Congress is downright stupid. They (congressmen) are making fools of the people. If it's certified as urgent in the next Congress, it means you're call is to refile the bill."

Speaker Jose de Venecia on Wednesday said the bill would be the subject of a caucus.

Asked if it would be passed, De Venecia said: "I hope so."

But House Majority Leader Prospero Nograles doubted the bill would be passed before yesterday's session.

"Seriously, I don't think it will pass," Nograles said, refusing to elaborate.

Invisible lobby

Rosales and Makati Rep. Teodoro Locsin Jr. said there appeared to be an "invisible" lobby being conducted by government security forces against the bill.

Rosales quoted a ranking House leader as saying the executive branch did not want the bill passed. She identified the House official but asked that his name be withheld.

"He said his hands were tied," she said.

Old communists

Rosales said she was told certain sectors in the executive branch were apprehensive about some of the funds going to communists.

"So what if they are communists? They would be old communists, anyway. Besides, they were really victims of human rights [violations]," Rosales said.

She said the executive branch's misgivings included the composition of the compensation board that would decide who should receive restitution and how much.

"Of course, we made it as independent of political control as possible for it to have integrity," she said.

Rosales said the administration also feared the bill would set a precedent.

"They are afraid a similar fund will have to be set aside for human rights victims under the Arroyo administration," she said.

Rosales said she went to see De Venecia to discuss the bill after the elections.

"He assured me it would be passed. [But] when the session resumed, he would no longer talk to me," she said.

'Don't rock the boat'

Before Congress went on recess ahead of the elections, Rosales raised the issue in the House and in the media.

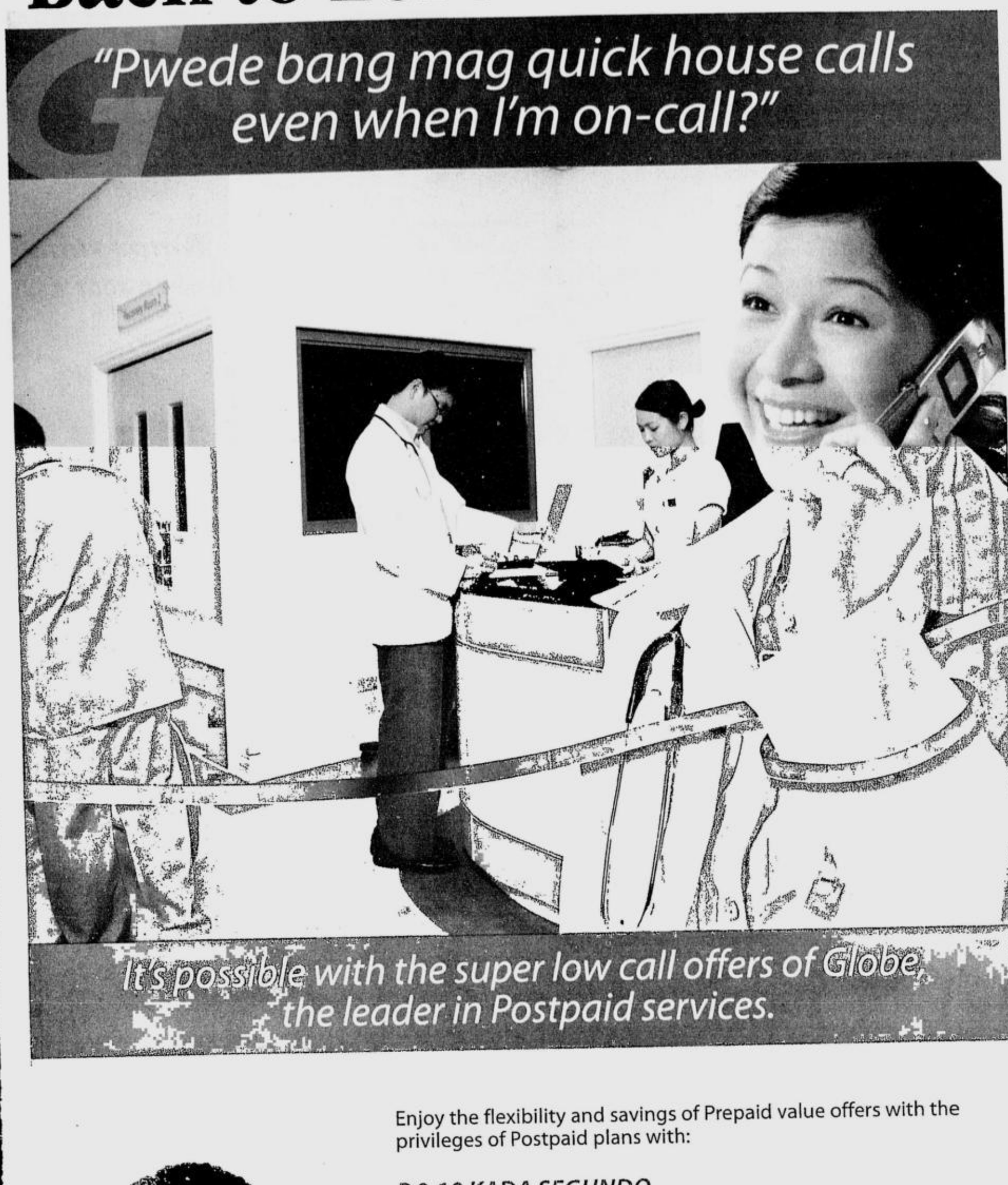
"(The unnamed House leader) told me: 'Do not rock the boat, Etta. We will pass the compensation bill,'" Rosales said.

"So I kept my peace and waited until after the elections. Now this happened," she said.

Locsin, in a privilege speech on Monday, said there were reports the National Security Council "or the military" had opposed the bill.

"During the plenary deliberations, no one appeared to comment on or oppose the bill for either the military or the Palace and the same [went for] the bicameral conference," Locsin said.

"After the Senate ratified the bicam report, the NSC informed the chamber it was uncomfortable with the bill, to wit: That most of the monies would go to the communists and subversives who, by the way, happened to be the only ones who fought the Marcos dictatorship effectively," he said.



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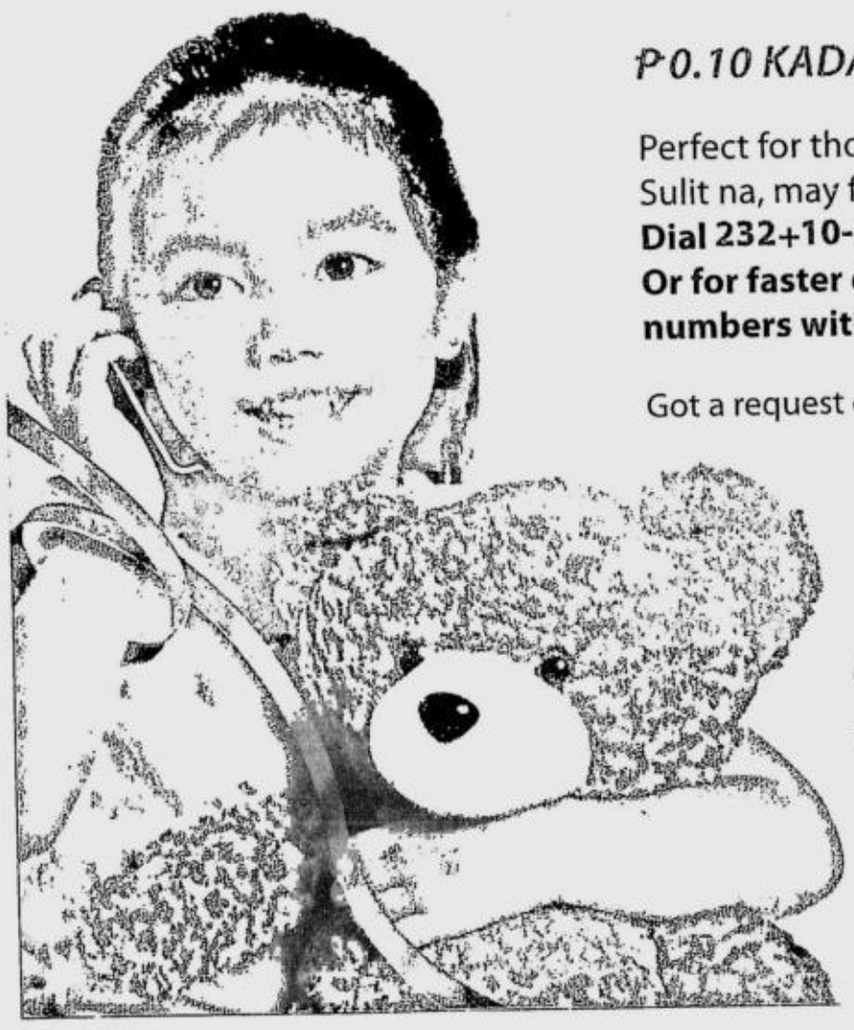

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Demolition in Muslim community

Grand Mosque in Baclaran left untouched

By Julie M. Aurelio

TWO DAYS AFTER VOWING TO DIE fighting for their mosque, Muslims in the Baclaran reclamation area finally let a demolition team tear down their shanties yesterday.

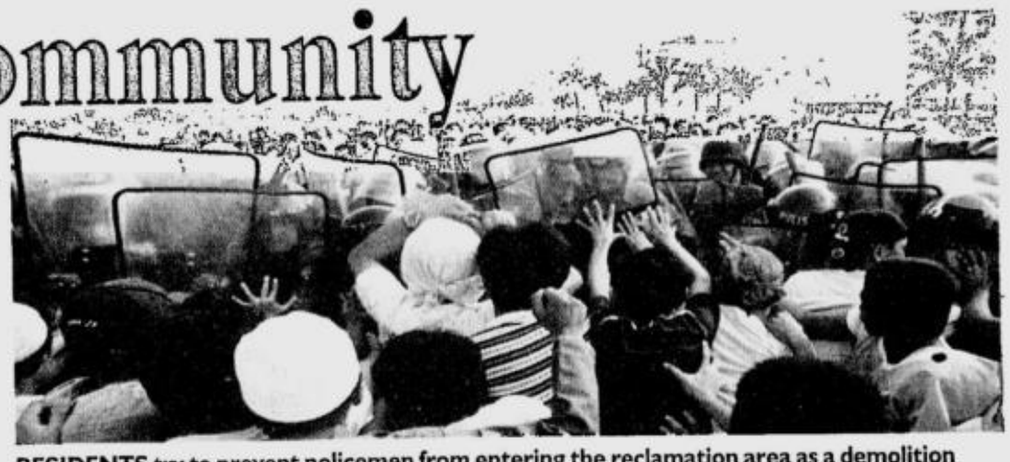
The team, however, spared the community's Grand Mosque, which residents vowed to defend, as a relocation site for the structure had yet to be identified.

More than 300 makeshift homes on Roxas Boulevard were demolished by the team from the Philippine Reclamation Authority (PRA).

"The Grand Mosque will not be included in the dismantling until a relocation site is found," said Amoraan Anduga, director of the Office of the President for External Affairs. He asked the residents not to go against the demolition.

Anduga said they were considering the Nayong Pilipino as a possible relocation site for the mosque.

DEMOLITION/ A26



RESIDENTS try to prevent policemen from entering the reclamation area as a demolition team began dismantling their homes. REM ZAMORA

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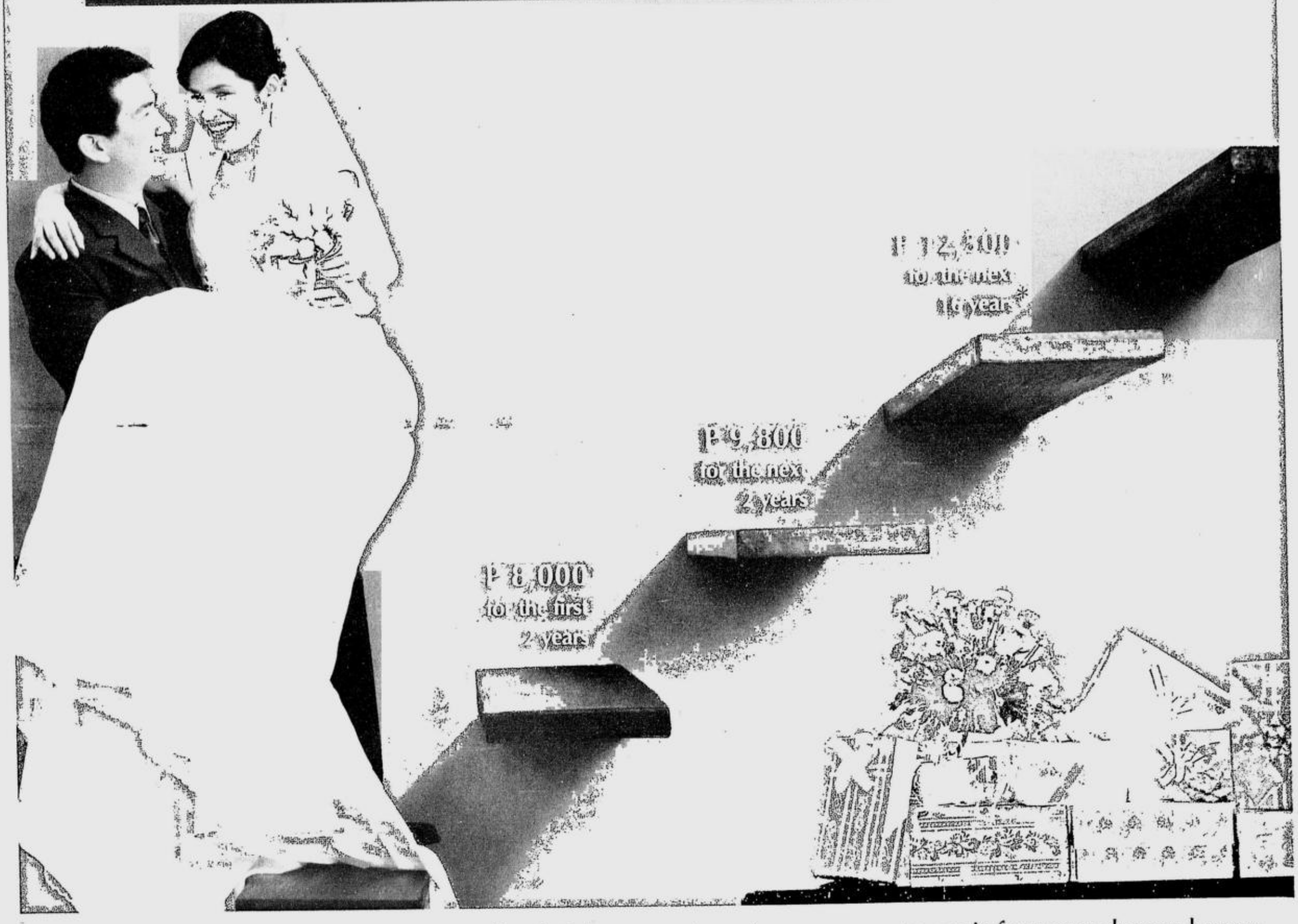

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Castañeda's lawyer denies asking Jimenez for $10M

By Julie M. Aurelio and Kristine L. Alave

THE LAWYER OF CAROL CASTAñeda denied yesterday reports that she was trying to extort $10 million from former congressman Mark Jimenez for the reconciliation of the estranged spouses.

"Carol was not extorting money from Mr. Jimenez. I was deliberately misquoted," Lorna Kapunan said, referring to former justice Harriet Demetriou's claim that Castañeda's lawyer tried to get the sum.

Virgilio Crespo, Jimenez's son by his first wife, also denied yesterday that his stepmother was asking for $10 million in settlement.

On Wednesday afternoon, Demetriou said she witnessed Kapunan asking Jimenez for the amount, as part of the terms of reconciliation.

"Atty. Lorna Kapunan told me it was the amount her client wanted before reconciling with Mr. Jimenez. I said, 'P10 million?' She clarified, 'No, it's $10 million'," Demetriou told a press conference.

She said Jimenez called her on May 29 to ask her to mediate in the ongoing reconciliation talks.

In a text message to the INQUIRER, Castañeda's lawyer said, "Harriet Demetriou misrepresented to me that she was close to both MJ and Carol. Carol denies that Harriet is her friend."

Crespo also denied Demetriou's claim. He said Castañeda had never been in contact with Jimenez, whose real name is Mark Crespo.

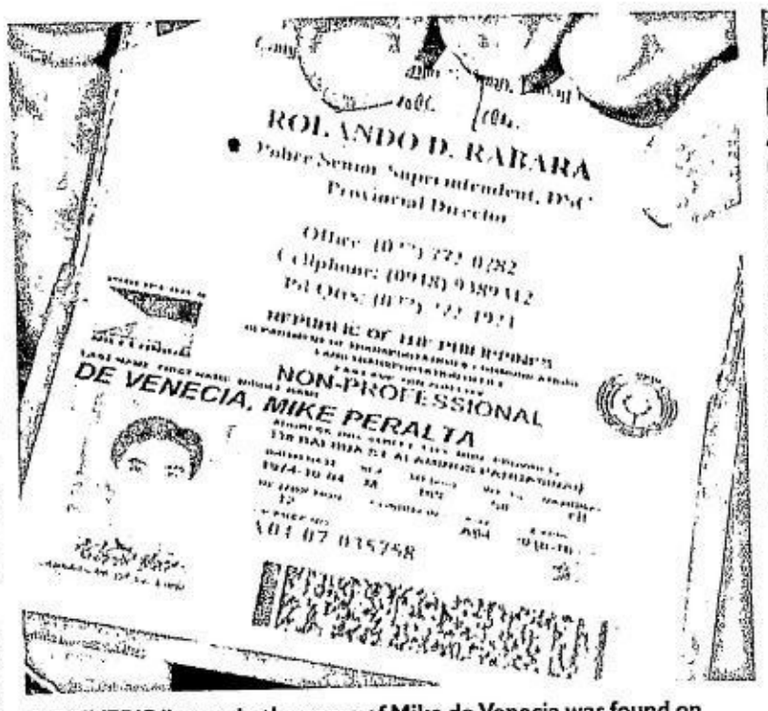
"Nobody in the family has heard anything about it," he said, adding it was Jimenez's camp who raised the idea of a settlement.

Kapunan said she made a mistake in trusting Demetriou, who claimed she wanted the parties to reconcile. Demetriou said Jimenez asked for her help in seeking a reconciliation with his wife since she was a mutual friend of the couple.

In denying Demetriou's allegation, Kapunan said, "I was deliberately misquoted. I said, for any settlement, the protection order of the court must be respected. MJ must give Carol and her children financial support. The $10 million was an estimate I gave, not Carol."

Castañeda filed with the Department of Justice kidnapping, serious illegal detention and grave coercion charges against her husband, weeks after she was removed from a drug rehabilitation facility.

Jimenez's lawyer, Frank Chavez, called for the dismissal of the charges. The lawyer asked the DOJ to inhibit itself from the case, as Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez apparently had a "curious interest" in the Jimenez case.



A DRIVER'S license in the name of Mike de Venecia was found on Richard Gonzales when he was brought by police to a San Juan police station. Gonzales has been accused of rape and estafa. RAFFY LERMA

'Kin' of powerful pols now faces rape charge

By Kristine L. Alave

HE LIVED THE LIFE OF A HIGH-flying swinger and boasted he was a relative of powerful politicians.

But his alleged connections did not stop police from arresting him yesterday for a heinous crime. Richard Gonzales, who claimed to be a nephew of former Ilocos Sur governor Luis "Chavit" Singson and Pangasinan Rep. Jose de Venecia now shares a jail cell with common criminals.

Gonzales was arrested at dawn yesterday on charges of rape, estafa, and fraud. Officials described him as a sweet-talking con man, who victimized both men and women.

Gonzales, 30, of 941 Sabino St. Binondo, Manila, was apprehended by San Juan police at about 2 a.m. yesterday as he was leaving the East Asia KTV Bar in Pasay City. Police said they received a tip that Gonzales was inside the bar and that a Nissan Safari Patrol with the plate No. 8 was parked outside.

Gonzales is now detained at the San Juan police station as charges are being prepared against him, according to San Juan police chief Supt. Rodelio Jocson.

Apart from Richard Gonzales, he also used the names Rick Gonzales, Ricky Singson, Andrew Yu, and Mike de Venecia. Mandaluyong police last month detained him briefly for driving while intoxicated in a car with No. 8 plates issued only to congressmen.

Police yesterday confiscated from the suspect numerous cellular phone SIM (subscriber identification module) cards, 16 credit cards, two government-issued No. 8 car plates, a driver's license with his picture and the name Mike de Venecia, and Land Transportation Office receipts in the name of Ricky Singson.

Demolition in Muslim community

From page A25

Earlier, residents prevented the demolition team and the police from entering the site, demanding a court order that would authorize the demolition.

Police said at least four members of the team were injured, while 10 residents were arrested for throwing pieces of hollow blocks and stones at policemen and the demolition team.

Southern Police District director Chief Supt. Roberto Rosales ordered the deployment of nearly 100 policemen from the district's civil disturbance management (CDM) and Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) teams.

"We were there to provide security if peace and order problems would arise during the demolition," Rosales said.

He described the operation as "generally peaceful," with no one getting seriously hurt during the demolition.

A group calling itself the Samahan ng Magkakaisang Muslim sa Roxas Blvd. earlier opposed the PRA's plan to tear down the houses and the Grand Mosque to make way for a commercial complex on the reclaimed land.

But the group said it would agree to move out of the area if the government could provide a suitable relocation site for the more than 300 families living in the area. The families were offered P30,000 to P100,000 to help them get settled in the new site.

"That's the problem, because the team is demolishing the structures while there is no relocation site for the families yet. The residents are still there. What about families who have no place to stay?" said Anduga.

He added that the Office of Muslim Affairs and the Saudi Arabian Embassy had written the Office of the President asking that "the sanctity of the Grand Mosque be preserved."

"As of now, we still don't know where the mosque will be relocated," Anduga said.

DID YOU KNOW

THE COMMISSION on Higher Education (CHEd) is the governing body for public and private institutions offering tertiary or graduate education. It was established on May 18, 1994 by the Higher Education Act (Republic Act No. 7722).

The CHEd sets the minimum standards for, and evaluates the performance of, programs and institutions. It can impose sanctions like the withdrawal of accreditation and termination of a school course.

Cyril L. Bonabente, Inquirer Research

METROBRIEFS

From Lipa to Malabon

A VAULT containing valuable documents belonging to a sister of a top election lawyer was found in a Malabon City fishpond near the Manila Bay shoreline early yesterday morning. SPO1 Ferdinand Espiritu of the Malabon police said the vault was discovered by residents of Kagitingan Extension, Muzon. The vault was stolen on June 5 from Leonor Macalintal-Almoro of Tierra Vista Subdivision, Lipa City in Batangas. Espiritu said Almoro is the sister of lawyer Romulo Macalintal. The vault yielded four Philippine passports, bank books, a driver's license belonging to Almoro and other documents. "We were able to contact her (Almoro) through a telephone number in one of the documents found inside the vault," Espiritu said. Lipa police are now looking for the victim's housemaid who had disappeared during the time the vault was stolen. Although the case had been turned over to the Lipa police, Espiritu said they would also conduct an investigation on how the vault ended up in the city. *Nancy Carvajal*

Leadership seminar

MORE than a hundred barangay officials from Quezon City are set to enroll at the University of the Philippines this month to improve their managerial and governance capabilities. According to Donato Matias, head of the Quezon City Barangay Operations Center, the captains and *kagawad* of the city's 142 barangays will undergo a two-month training seminar at the UP National College of Public Administration and Governance beginning on the third week of June. "The city government has partnered with the UP to help improve the barangay officials' leadership, communication and fiscal management skills," Matias told the INQUIRER yesterday. He added that without the necessary training, barangay captains usually prepared the budget alone, without coordinating with the other barangay *kagawad*. "The two-month seminar, or the Sustainable Barangay Development Course would teach them transparency in the conception and implementation of projects," Matias said. The officials will also learn the art of public speaking from their UP professors. *Margaux C. Ortiz*

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The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

Bush, Putin meet amid new East-West tension

HEILIGENDAMM, GERmany—US President George W. Bush sought to calm tensions with Moscow on Thursday ahead of a meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin at a Group of Eight (G8) summit in Germany.

GERMAN Chancellor Angela Merkel (second, left) and her husband Joachim Sauer (left) pose with Russian President Vladimir Putin and his wife Lyudmila Putina on the first day of the G8 summit in Germany. AFP

"It is important for Russia and Russians to understand that I believe the Cold War ended, that Russia is not an enemy of the United States that there's a lot of areas where we can work together," Bush said, citing Iran and proliferation as examples.

His conciliatory comments came as G8 leaders appeared to be nearing a consensus on the divisive issue of how best to combat global warming.

British Prime Minister Tony Blair, after meeting with Bush, said he expected leaders to agree to make "substantial" cuts in greenhouse gas emissions, but said they would not fix a numerical target, like the 50 percent cut by 2050 that German Chancellor Angela Merkel, the summit host, has pushed for.

Security remains tight around the summit venue, a luxury hotel in the small seaside town of Heiligendamm.

On Thursday morning police power boats stopped two smaller craft trying to break through the security cordon, ramming one of them and dumping its occupants into the Baltic.

At a morning session focused on economic issues, Merkel sat between Bush and Putin, who had engaged in public sparring on US missile shield plans in the run-up to the summit.

The two presidents, smiling and looking relaxed, have not met face-to-face since before Putin launched an attack on the Bush administration in February, accusing it of trying to force its will on the world and become its "single master."

"There's a lot of constructive work we can do and so I'm looking forward to my dialogue with Vladimir Putin this afternoon," Bush said on Thursday.

Bush said he would reiterate to Putin his proposal to have Russia send generals and scientists to the United States to reassure them on his plans to put a radar system in the Czech Republic and interceptor missiles in Poland. *Reuters*

Boy, 9, makes a career playing video games

HOLBROOK, NY—VICTOR M. de Leon III has been playing video games on the professional circuit for five years, racking up thousands of dollars in prizes and endorsements at tournaments around the country. He has a corporate sponsor, a publicist and a website. A documentary filmmaker has been following him for months.

Victor is 9. He weighs 56 pounds and gets above-average marks in the third grade.

Known as Lil' Poison, Victor is thought to be the world's youngest professional gamer. Starting Friday, he is to be among 2,500 competitors in the three-day Major League Gaming Pro Circuit Event at the Meadowlands in New Jersey, battling on the Xbox game "Halo 2" for prizes up to $20,000.

Asked what he thinks about the fuss over his exploits, Victor shrugged. Pressed, he mumbled: "I don't know. I didn't think about it."

Victor's aptitude surfaced at age 2, when he began mimicking his father's play. At age 4, Victor joined a team with his father and two uncles at a New York "Halo" contest, winning fourth place—behind his Uncle Gabriel, a coach and mentor.

At age 5, he entered the Major League Games and ranked in its top 64 players internationally. By the time he was 7, Victor competed in Chicago against more than 550 contestants, placing second, behind Gabriel.

Besides prizes and product endorsements, Victor has a deal worth about $20,000 annually, as well as expenses for trips to tournaments, from his sponsor, 1UP Network, a division of Ziff Davis Game Group, owners of gamer magazines and websites. De Leon declined to specify how much his son has accumulated, but said that it is almost enough to cover a private college education.

Victor said he has no plans about what to do when he grows up. He enjoys Star Wars toys, fried chicken, jujitsu, guitar music, basketball, his hamster and his dog, Rocky. *New York Times News Service*

Hundreds die of hunger as Indian tea estates close

JALPAIGURI, INDIA—At least 700 Indian tea workers have died from diseases linked with malnutrition over the past year after the closure of tea estates left them with no income, and hundreds more are still starving, a court inquiry has found.

A PLANT seed which tea workers eat at a closed tea garden in Jalpaiguri in India. REUTERS

Two years ago, poor production and low yields led to the closure of 16 tea estates in Jalpaiguri, a remote part of West Bengal state bordering the Himalayan kingdom of Bhutan, leaving plantation workers with no means of income.

Investigations by the Supreme Court and tea workers' associations found that this had directly led to the deaths, leaving hundreds more unable to feed themselves.

But the government says the deaths, which they have recorded to be around 570, are related to diseases which are unrelated to starvation.

"The government may portray the deaths their way," said Anuradha Talwar, a Supreme Court adviser, who compiled a report about the deaths last month.

"But the fact remains that workers have starved to death and many are waiting to die," she said, adding that many were suffering from tuberculosis and night blindness.

As a result of the deteriorating situation, hundreds of former tea workers are being forced to travel across the border to Bhutan every day to work in the tiny nation's growing stone crushing and mineral factories.

Those who stayed back—starving and weak with no money for the last two years—are being forced to forage for food in nearby forests to keep themselves and their children alive. *Reuters*

US Senate rejects most changes to immigration bill

WASHINGTON—THE SENATE signaled support for major provisions of a comprehensive immigration bill on Wednesday by rejecting many proposed amendments, including one that would have made it much harder for many illegal immigrants to achieve legal status.

Architects of the legislation said they hoped that by plowing through the amendments, they would gain support for a motion to end debate on the legislation. The motion, scheduled for a vote on Thursday, needs 60 votes to succeed.

The Senate bill, which calls for the biggest changes in immigration policy since 1986, embodies a fragile bipartisan compromise strongly supported by President Bush. It would offer legal status to most of the estimated 12 million illegal immigrants in the United States. Administration officials said they hoped that the Senate would pass the bill with 70 votes, to build momentum in the House, where the legislation faces opposition.

By a vote of 51-46, the Senate on Wednesday rejected an amendment proposed by Sen. John Cornyn, R-Texas, that could have made hundreds of thousands of illegal immigrants ineligible for legal status if they had flouted deportation orders or been convicted of identity theft or fraudulent use of identification documents.

Cornyn said his amendment was a defining issue for presidential candidates. Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., a co-author of the overall bill, voted against Cornyn's amendment and for a Democratic alternative.

By a vote of 66-32, the Senate approved the Democratic alternative, which would increase penalties for illegal immigrants who have been convicted of sex offenses, crimes of domestic violence or the use of firearms in alien-smuggling operations.

The Senate rejected a proposal to change the structure of the bill's guest worker program. Under the program, foreign workers could get two-year visas, which could be renewed twice, but the guest workers would have to leave the United States for a year in between their stays here. *NYT*

WORLDBRIEFS

'Unstable' German tries to board Pope's car

VATICAN CITY—A German man jumped a barricade Wednesday and tried to board Pope Benedict XVI's open-top jeep before being wrestled to the ground by papal bodyguards in St. Peter's Square. Pope Benedict was apparently oblivious as the man, later described as "mentally unstable," tried to force his way through the guards and succeeded in grabbing onto the back of the vehicle as the Pope was riding through a crowd of some 30,000 pilgrims at the start of a weekly audience. The man wearing a pink shirt, black shorts and a baseball cap, identified as a 27-year-old German national, was soon overpowered by the security detail flanking the jeep. Throughout the incident, the leader of the world's 1.1 billion Roman Catholics, standing up behind the driver of the open vehicle, continued to wave to the pilgrims, and the car proceeded at the same stately pace. Vatican spokesperson Federico Lombardi described the man as a "mentally unstable" German national and said he had been taken to a psychiatric ward. *AFP*

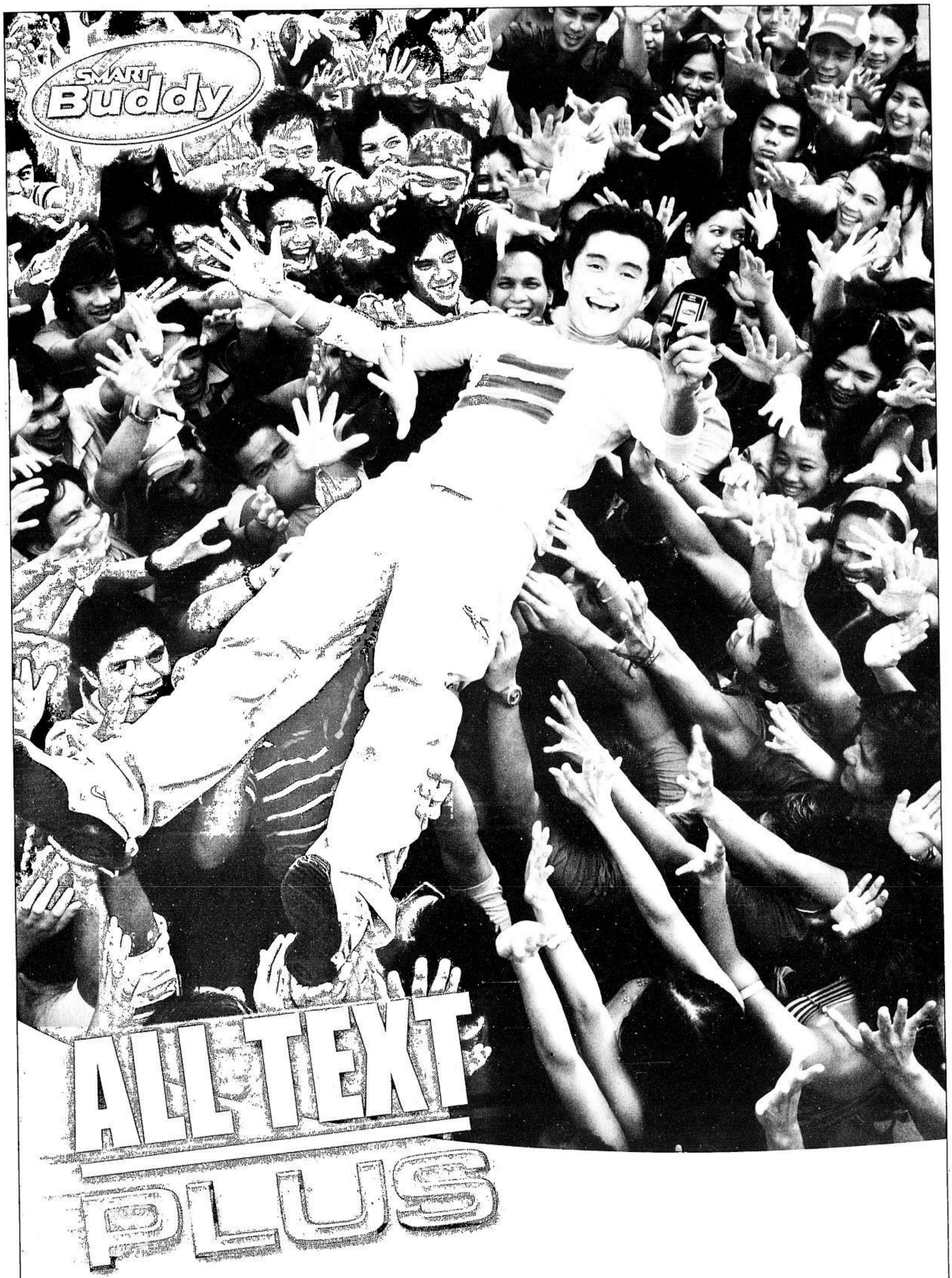
S. Korea panel says president broke election law

ROH AP

SEOUL—South Korea's state poll watchdog ruled Thursday that outspoken President Roh Moo-hyun broke election laws by making a speech which strongly criticized the main opposition party. The National Election Commission said Roh breached his obligation to remain neutral in election matters. "The president violated the election laws ... by saying that it should be unfair for a certain political party to win the next presidential election (on Dec. 19) and making defamatory remarks against its presidential hopefuls," said spokesperson Yang Keum-suk after a seven-hour meeting. The laws require the president to be politically neutral, even though he is the head of government elected on a party ticket. The commission indicated it would not seek any legal action, even though it was passing its third ruling on Roh's impartiality since he came to office in 2003. *AFP*

FDA issues strictest warning on diabetes drugs

WASHINGTON—The Food and Drug Administration has called for the toughest safety warning on two diabetes drugs—Avandia and Actos—whose health risks have become a focus of congressional concern. That decision, disclosed Wednesday by the FDA commissioner at a packed House hearing, comes more than a year after the agency's safety reviewers strongly recommended just such a step. And it occurs amid a congressional investigation into why the agency delayed its warnings about Avandia for years. In a written statement, the commissioner, Andrew C. von Eschenbach, said the agency has asked the makers of Actos and Avandia to carry the more prominent warning—a so-called black box warning—of its heart risks because "despite existing warnings, these drugs were being prescribed to patients with significant heart failure." *NYT*



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LeBron brings show to NBA's biggest stage/A32

SPORTS

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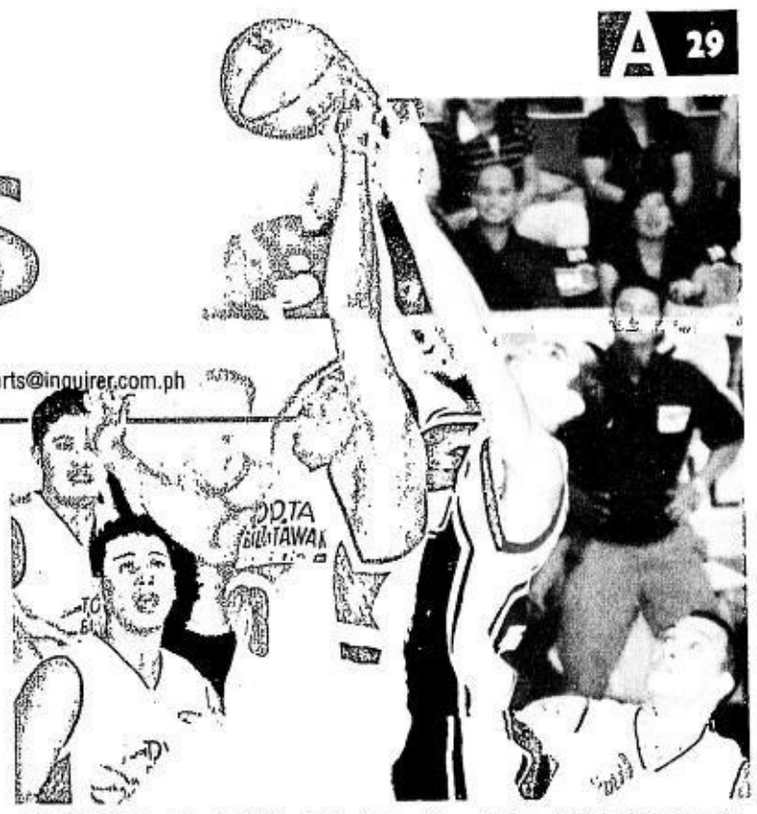
Cebuana, Harbour seal title showdown



CEBUANA Lhuillier's Micheal Burtscher (fourth from left) battles Toyota Balintawak standout Joe Devance for possession. PDI PHOTO/RYAN LIM

By Jasmine W. Payo

IT WILL BE A FACE-OFF BETWEEN THE TOP seed and the tournament favorite after all.

League-leading Cebuana Lhuillier-Pera Padala and defending champion Harbour Centre arranged a best-of-five showdown for the PBL Unity Cup championship after dispatching their respective foes in a pair of winner-take-all semifinal battles yesterday.

GAMES TOMORROW
(*The Arena, San Juan*)
1:30 p.m.—Henkel Sista vs Toyota Balintawak (for third)
3:30 p.m.—Cebuana Lhuillier vs Harbour Centre (Game 1 of best-of-five Finals)

Doug Kramer kept Joe Devance out of sync, then keyed a fourth-quarter breakaway as the Cebu-based Moneymen ousted the Toyota Balintawak Road Kings, 72-58, at the Olivarez College Sports Center.

Jason Castro and JC Intal shone as Harbour outscored Henkel Sista, 23-10, in the third quarter and went on to post an 88-67 rout that kept the Batang Pier on track for a third straight title.

Ryan Araña earlier buried a buzzer-beating midcourt heave to give Harbour a 41-33 lead at halftime, and Batang Pier stretched this to 64-43 at the end of the third quarter.

The Moneymen and Batang Pier, who finished 1-2 in the eliminations, will clash in Game 1 of the Finals series at 3:30 p.m. tomorrow at The Arena in San Juan.

Kramer pumped in seven of his 12 points in a pivotal fourth-quarter surge that widened a 52-51 margin to a 68-56 spread.

But the strapping 6-foot-4 forward shone brightest in defense as he forced Fil-Am and former MVP Devance into his worst game this conference.

"Kramer was a revelation," said Moneymen coach Luigi Trillo. "He's the reason why Devance was out of sync."

Devance took his fifth and final foul with 5:36 minutes left on a charging call on Kramer.

"I'm so overwhelmed," said Trillo. "I'm so proud with the way the boys played. They believed what we're doing in defense."

Kramer, who hauled down seven rebounds, buried five straight points in a 9-0 spurt for a 61-53 Cebuana edge with five minutes left.

Second stringers Alfie Grijaldo and Ariel Capus starred for the Moneymen as they took a 48-39 lead in the third period while Macky Escalona also contributed five of his eight points in the Moneymen's fourth-quarter run.

Capus topscored with 14 markers, while MVP contender Ken Bono added 12 points and six boards for the Moneymen.

"I can't say enough about the heart of Escalona, Kramer, Bono, Capus and (Eric) Dela Cuesta," said Trillo.

Center Samigue Eman finished with a day-high 20 points for the Super Sealers, who badly missed the stellar play of Fil-Am Ryan Reyes.

Hobbled by a groin injury, Reyes saw action for only five minutes and finished with just five points.

The Moneymen earned an outright Final Four berth with Batang Pier, but found themselves on the brink of elimination with a 68-65 loss in the series opener. The Moneymen forged a winner-take all battle with a 71-62 triumph in Game 2.

The scores:

First Game

CEBUANA LHUILLIER 72—Capus 14, Kramer 12, Bono 12, Grijaldo 10, Escalona 8, Dela Cuesta 4, Sta. Maria 3, Oreta 2, Burtscher 2, Solis 2, Dulay 2, Viardo 1, Yee 0.

TOYOTA BALINTAWAK 58—Daa 11, Rodriguez 11, Tan 7, Cruz 7, Coronel 5, Cabahug 5, Devance 4, Dedicatoria 4, Alcaraz 2, Jaime 2, Coching 0, Baluyot 0, Guerrero 0, Fajardo 0.

Quarters: 14-19, 30-28, 52-51, 72-58

Second Game

HARBOUR CENTRE 88—Castro 16, Fernandez 12, Duncil 9, Belga 8, Lanete 6, Intal 6, Gamboa 6, Gaco 6, Vergara 5, Alonzo 4, Asoro 3, Araña 3, Stephens 2, Capati 2, Ortiguerra 0.

HENKEL SISTA 67—Eman 20, Bonus 6, Misa 6, Reyes 5, Javier 5, Bauzon 5, Saldua 5, Villamin 5, Malabanan 3, ebuan 2, Matias 2, Yambao 2, Robles 1, Alfad 0.

Quarters: 18-15, 41-33, 64-43, 88-67

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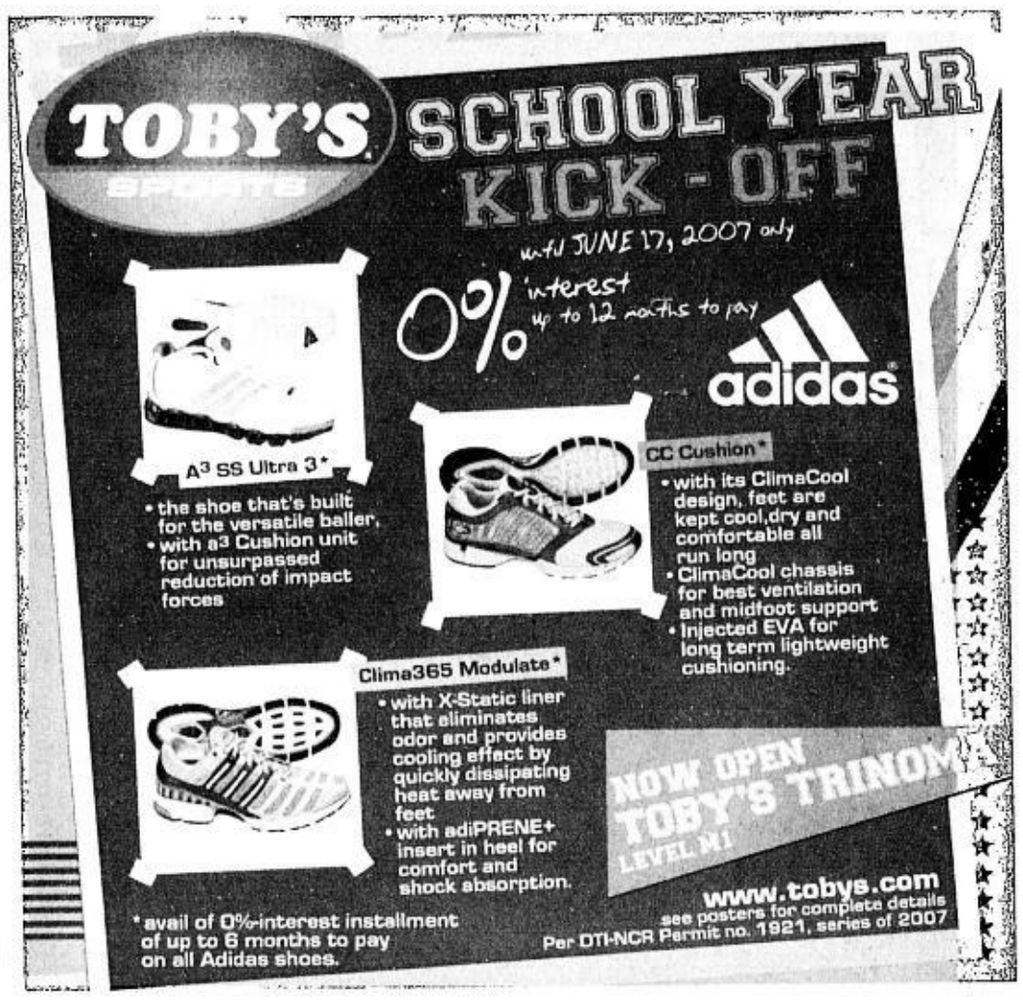

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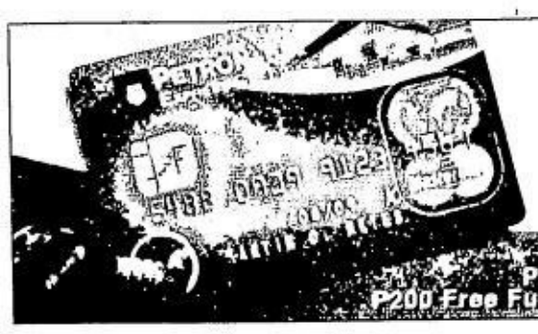

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Fiesta Cup wild-card phase up

GAMES TODAY (*Araneta Coliseum*)
4:35 p.m.—Sta. Lucia vs San Miguel Beer
7:20 p.m.—Purefoods vs Coca-Cola

By Musong R. Castillo

PUREFOODS SEEMS THE MOST DANGEROUS team in the Talk 'N Text-PBA Fiesta Cup wild-card phase.

The Tender Juicy Giants, who were dragged into the knockout stage mainly because of manpower woes, play with a complete lineup for only the second time in the tournament today when they square off with Coca-Cola in a win-or-go-home game.

Second behind Red Bull last year, the Giants slug it out with the Tigers in the 7:20 contest tonight at the Big Dome in Cubao with the odds stacked in their favor.

And coach Ryan Gregorio knows that he has something special happening.

"A 6-12 record is not something to be proud of," Gregorio said last week after formally nailing the No. 8 spot. "We're confident (for the rest of the tournament) because I finally have a complete lineup."

San Miguel Beer, the No. 6 seed, and Sta. Lucia, which barely made it past the eliminations, square off in the other KO match at 4:35 p.m.

The winners then collide Sunday for the right to complete the quarterfinal cast already made up of Barangay Ginebra, Talk 'N Text and Air21.

Marc Pingris has returned from injury and Rommel Adducul was acquired in a lopsided trade with Red Bull, giving Gregorio two solid forces underneath, which made the Giants' offense run on all cylinders the last time out.

As a result, James Yap tossed in a career-high 41 points in a 109-97 bamboozling of also-ran Welcoat last June 1.

Only Purefoods will be coming into the wild-card phase the winner of its last elimination round outing.

The Realtors ended up with a 5-13 record in the eliminations, losing some of their games in an ugly manner.

Sta. Lucia would have to provide solid support to the Williams—Jamaal and super rookie Kelly—to even think of upsetting the Beermen.

San Miguel Beer, which just two weeks ago had a chance to make the Final Four automatically, floundered in the final two minutes of its clash with Air21 Wednesday, losing the chance to make the quarterfinals outright. *Musong R. Castillo*

No PBA fireworks on RTL issue

THERE WERE NO FIREWORKS AND THE CONtroversy regarding the Philippine Basketball Association's Restricted Trading List (RTL) died down as quickly as it started.

It was all's well that ends well for the board after PBA chair Ricky Vargas and commissioner Noli Eala announced that the member teams were "satisfied with the explanation given to them."

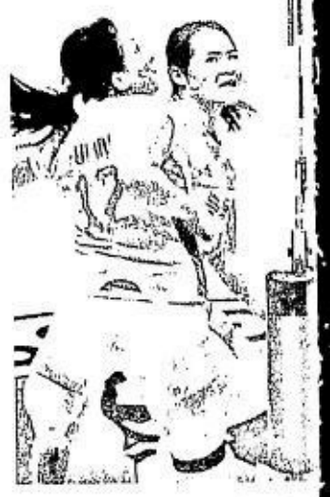
Red Bull and San Miguel Beer aired their sides on the issue of the RTL, which at least two prominent members of the board questioned after a three-player, three-team trade last week.

However, Eala and Vargas declined to divulge the details of the explanations by both teams, saying that "they are confidential and sensitive to the teams concerned."

"I'd like to keep that within the room, it's a private matter to the owners," Vargas said. "All we can say is that Red Bull was very transparent."

The controversy stemmed from the transfer of Red Bull's Enrico Villanueva to San Miguel Beer for Rommel Adducul, who later found himself with Purefoods, a sister team of SMB.

Villanueva was supposed to be protected in the RTL and could only be traded, in this case with San Miguel, for Danny Seigle. But the former Ateneo ace was "delisted," which made the trade possible. *Musong R. Castillo*



ADAMSON'S Janet Serafica SSC court as Joy Pulido (12) to foil the play.

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Tigresses sweep Lady Pirates; San Sebastian foils Adamson

tries to tip the ball into the
and Jaroensri Bualee spring
INQUIRER PHOTO / AUGUST DELA CRUZ

UNIVERSITY OF SANTO TOMAS, DRAWING crack performances from Mary Jean Balse and Venus Bernal, swept erstwhile unbeaten Lyceum, 25-15, 25-14, 25-20, yesterday to stay in the race for one of the three remaining semifinal berths in the 2007 Shakey's V-League at The Arena in San Juan.

But Adamson's own semifinal bid suffered a big blow when it dropped a four-setter to San Sebastian College in the second game and fell to solo sixth with a 2-4 mark.

The SSC spikers, with Thai import Jaroensri Bualee on the firing end, pulled out a 25-18, 25-27, 25-21, 25-17 victory over the Lady Falcons to gain a share of the lead with the Lady Pirates at 5-1.

To gain a playoff for the fifth and last semifinal berth, Adamson must win its final game against Letran on Sunday and hope that La Salle and UST, both toting 3-3 cards, lose to Lyceum and FEU, respectively.

Ateneo, tipped to clinch the third semifinal slot, was still playing FEU at presstime.

STANDINGS	W	L
Lyceum	5	1
SSC	5	1
Ateneo	3	2
La Salle	3	3
UST	3	3
Adamson	2	4
FEU	1	4
Letran	1	5

GAMES TODAY
(The Arena, San Juan)
1 p.m.—Lyceum vs UST
3 p.m.—SSC vs Adamson
5 p.m.—Ateneo vs FEU

Expecting a hard game, the Tigresses instead found an easy outing against the Lady Pirates, whom they dominated to post what was only their third win in six games. UST shares fourth place with idle La Salle heading into the last two playdates of the eliminations.

Only the top five teams will advance to the double-round semifinal phase where they will carry their respective records in the preliminaries.

Balse and Vernal combined for 35 attacks for UST.

Lyceum, which swept its first five games in impressive fashion, took it easy against UST, apparently conserving its energy for the tough semifinal grind. Sherrilyn Carrillo led Lyceum's losing stand with eight points.

Games are telecast over NBN-4 within the week from 2 p.m. to-4 p.m.

Vintage Coo, Benitez lead Class O doubles

MULTIAWARDED BONG COO teamed up with niece Irene Benitez to capture the Class O ladies' doubles top spot in the 36th PBC-Boysen International Open Tenpin Bowling Championships at the SM Mall of Asia Bowling Centre.

The Timberpro pair banked on Benitez's two-game tally of 424 (221-2-3) to go with Coo's 372 for a frontrunning tally of 796 in the two-week kegfest.

"Irene anchored our doubles partnership," Coo, also the secretary general of the organizing Philippine Bowling Congress, said. "She needed two strikes in the last frame so we could emerge on top. I am proud that she did it."

The Coo-Benitez pair moved past the duo of Coo and Canare, who held the lead for a day with a 785, while the teams of Apple Posadas and Marjo Reyes and Liza Clutario and Apple Posadas shared third with a 750.

Tournament director Archie Perez explained that a bowler can team up with anyone in the doubles and trios and make as many attempts "but only their best score, of course, will count."

National junior bowlers Ederick Florencio continued to show the way in the Class O doubles with an 866 total, 14 pins in front of national pool keglers Chester King and Miguel Crisol (852).

After Day 6 of the championship, the RP pool troika of Benshir Layoso, world champion Biboy Rivera and Joonee Gatchalian remained in first place in the Class O team event with a 1,234 total.

Prima's Bonnie Solis, Ian Dychango and Paeng Nepomuceno were just 20 pins off the pace with a 1214.

Canare, Apple Posadas and Liza Clutario were on top in the Ladies Class O with a 1,282.

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Three must be the 'IT' number right now since the new Mazda3 is style and substance x3. And what better way to celebrate this baby's third anniversary in the Philippines than to bring in the hottest, newest Mazda3, with over 100 enhancements?

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Zoom zoom all the way

So when you hear that the new Mazda3's driving dynamics include S-VT and VIS, Electronic Throttle Control, Activematic Transmission, Enhanced Sport-Tuned Suspension and Improved Noise, Vibration and Harshness (NVH) reduction, what do all these actually mean to you?

Sequential Valve Timing (S-VT) and Variable Induction System (VIS) give you optimum power delivery, fuel economy, and emission performance since it controls intake air volume corresponding to engine operation conditions. The engine's Electronic Throttle Control also enhances acceleration feel.

The Enhanced Sport-Tuned Suspension includes MacPherson-strut front suspension, which gives sharper steering response at fast cornering and smoother, more stable roll control and a flat ride, and the E-type multi-link rear suspension, which provides higher stability during high speed cornering, substantial damping force even with very short strokes and maximizes the stabilizer effect.

The 2007 Mazda3 also features Improved NVH reduction, which substantially reduces noise coming from the engine, generator, road and wind as well as the droning sound.

Hotter than ever

You can't miss the New Mazda3's High-Intensity Discharge (HID) Auto-Headlamps these are not only bright, they give the face of the car a fresh look. And when you flip to the other side of the vehicle, you'll also admire the new rear combination Light-emitting diode (LED) lamps. It also has a bootlid recess, which gives an easier fit for the hand when opening the trunk.

The New Mazda3 shows off new front and rear bumpers, and its new front grille gives it a curvier and more striking look. You will roll in style too, thanks to the class-leading 17-inch wheels, which were re-designed across all the models.

Inside the New Mazda3, the black out instrument meter gives it a clean look, and the steering wheel audio controls enhance the sporty, sophisticated drive.

While it's pretty obvious it's thrill x3, hop into the 2007 Mazda3 and experience the emotion of motion for yourself it certainly doesn't hurt that it looks hot too!

The New Mazda3's suggested retail price starts at ₱799,000. Mazda has garnered a total of 376 awards worldwide. For more information on Mazda, please call the Mazda hotline at 85-MAZDA (85-62932) or visit www.mazda.com.ph or any of its dealerships: Mazda Alabang, Mazda Greenhills, Mazda Quezon Avenue, Mazda Makati and Mazda Cebu.

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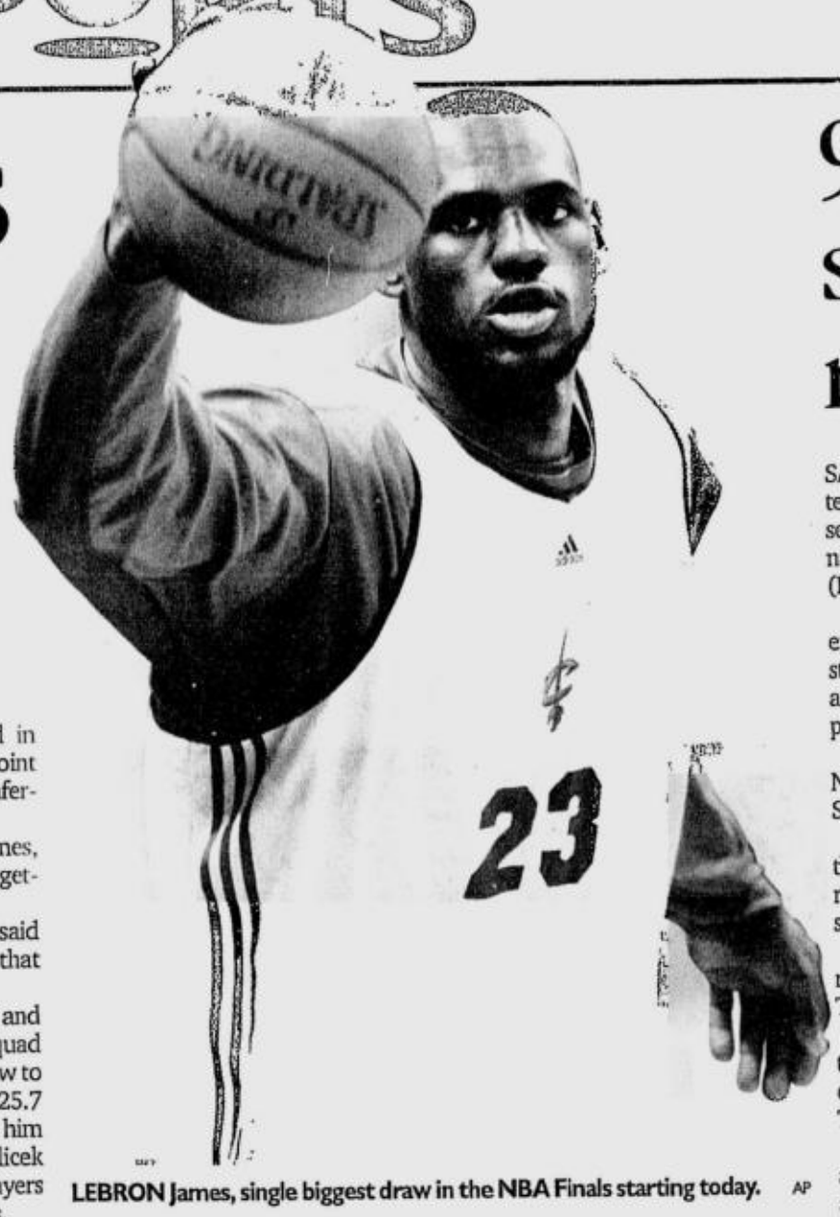
SPORTS

LeBron brings show to NBA's biggest stage



LEBRON James, single biggest draw in the NBA Finals starting today. AP

SAN ANTONIO—HEADPHONES TILTED BACK on his head, LeBron James walked the Cleveland Cavaliers through the shadowy tunnel and into the arena's gleaming lights—and their first NBA finals.

"We're here now!" James shouted.

He brought them.

And he will decide how far they'll go.

Tagged as the face of the National Basketball Association and saddled with huge expectations, James arrived at American basketball's ultimate stage Wednesday as the Cavaliers and San Antonio Spurs trained for the last time before Thursday's Game 1 at AT&T Center.

The climactic setting is a new one for the Cavaliers. It was only four years ago when they won 17 games while playing in front of as many empty seats as filled ones at home.

"It was like we weren't even in the NBA," said center Zydrunas Ilgauskas, drafted by the club in 1996. "We were in a deep depression as an organization."

The 22-year-old James has been a household name in the United States since he was an Akron, Ohio, high school phenomenon.

In these playoffs, his second trip to the postseason, he has elevated his game to a higher level, pushing the Cavaliers within four victories of Cleveland's first major sports title since 1964.

His appearance in the best-of-seven series should do wonders for the NBA's globalization plan. Undoubtedly, he'll also boost TV ratings, perhaps tempting casual viewers interested in seeing if he can match his jaw-dropping, 48-point performance in Game 5 of the Eastern Conference finals against Detroit.

With most of the attention focused on James, the other team in this LeBronian lovefest isn't getting its proper due.

"The league is about new, exciting things," said Spurs forward Michael Finley. "And LeBron is that thing right now."

The Spurs have always won with defense, and still do. The league's stingiest defensive squad during the regular season must figure out how to slow James, who sliced up the Pistons for 25.7 points, 9.2 rebounds and 8.5 assists, putting him with Oscar Robertson (1963), John Havlicek (1968) and Larry Bird (1986) as the only players to reach those averages in a conference finals.

Detroit tried to double- and triple-team James, whose ability to pass over the top of defenders allowed him to find teammates for easy shots.

Spurs forward Bruce Bowen will be assigned to guard James, but he'll need help, especially when James decides to post him up near the basket.

"He's so strong and young; it's hard to believe that he's 22 with the body of a 30-year-old," Bowen said. "That creates problems. There's nothing you can do about that. There are certain things you can do to adjust, but when people are just physically gifted and that talented, it creates a difficulty." *AP*

Kerr gets GM job at Suns

PHOENIX—THE PHOENIX SUNS APPOINTED FORMER NBA SHARPSHOOTER Steve Kerr as general manager and president of basketball operations on Wednesday. Kerr, the most accurate three-point shooter in NBA history, will take over some of the duties of coach Mike D'Antoni, who retains his position as VP. D'Antoni inherited GM responsibility after Bryan Colangelo moved to Toronto in February 2006. "I love this team," Kerr said. "I love the style of play. I'm not trying to make sweeping changes because this is one of the best teams in the NBA already.

Meanwhile, Billy Donovan quit as coach of the Orlando Magic on Wednesday, six days after taking the job. Donovan walked away from a contract worth $5.5 million per year to return to the University of Florida, where he led the Gators to two straight national college championships. *Reuters*

9 non-US stars make record cast

SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS—A RECORD NINE International players will take part in the best-of-seven NBA Finals, which will be televised to 205 nations in 46 languages starting here Thursday (Friday morning in Manila).

French guard Tony Parker, Argentina playmaker Manu Ginobili and United States Virgin Islands standout Tim Duncan will lead the San Antonio against a Cleveland lineup that has three global players in supporting roles to star LeBron James.

The old mark of most non-US players in an NBA Finals was set in 2005 with seven when the Spurs defeated Detroit in seven games.

Parker, averaging 19.8 points and 6.4 assists in the playoffs, will be marrying actress Eva Longoria next month. He could take some bruises should he try to draw charging fouls off James.

"I would rather have another (championship) ring and be messed up in the (wedding) picture. That's fine," Parker said.

Ginobili, who helped his homeland capture the 2004 Athens Olympic gold, said the strength of James racing to make a dunk is intimidating. The Cavaliers beat the Spurs twice this year.

"If he's going full speed it's (scary) because of all the speed and power he has," said Ginobili, averaging 16.4 points a game in the playoffs.

Duncan was the NBA Finals MVP in San Antonio's three titles in the past eight years—1999, 2003 and 2005—and is averaging 23.2 points.

Other international players on the Spurs roster are Dutchman Francisco Elson, Slovenia's Beno Udrih and Argentina's Fabricio Oberto, who averages 5.9 points and 5.1 rebounds a game.

Lithuanian center Zydrunas Ilgauskas, averaging 13.8 points and 9.5 rebounds, will be called upon to test Duncan inside.

Montenegro's Aleksandar Pavlovic averages 9.0 points in 30 minutes a night for the Cavaliers while Brazil's Anderson Varejao averages 5.6 points and 6.1 rebounds a contest. *AFP*

Djokovic faces Nadal juggernaut

CAN Rafael Nadal be stopped? Djokovic believes so. AFP

PARIS—NOVAK DJOKOVIC HIT DELICATE DROP shots and 200 kph serves, thunderous forehands and sharply angled backhands, mixing strokes so well even the relentless Rafael Nadal struggled to chase them down.

That was two months ago at the hard-court final in Key Biscayne, Florida, where Djokovic achieved the biggest victory of his career. Another milestone looms Friday, when the genial Serb plays in a Grand Slam semifinal for the first time at the French Open.

Once again, the opponent will be Nadal. This time the Spaniard will be on his favorite surface—clay.

"He plays much better on the clay," Djokovic said. "So it's not the same match, it's not the same player. On clay you have to do more and try more to earn the point, because the balls he doesn't get on the hard court, he gets here."

Top-ranked Roger Federer, seeking the only Grand Slam title he has yet to win, will face Nikolay Davydenko in the other semifinal. A much-anticipated rematch of last year's Nadal-Federer final looms.

But don't count Djokovic out. At 20 he's the newest celebrity in men's tennis, touted as a future Grand Slam champ because of his all-around game.

The slender Djokovic may lack the strength and stamina to stay with the muscular Nadal in a grinding clay-court match, however. Nadal is 19-0 at Roland Garros, 32-0 in best-of-five-set matches on clay and bidding to become the first man to win three straight French titles since Bjorn Borg in 1978-81.

Nadal's run in Paris includes a victory in the 2006 quarterfinals against Djokovic, who retired with a back injury trailing, 6-4, 6-4.

"He's the best player in the world on this surface, and everybody knows that," Djokovic said. "He's really dominant, and he didn't lose in the French Open for the past three years. So he plays with a lot of motivation and confidence. He's a big favorite, whoever he plays against on this surface, but I hope it's going to be a good match."

Djokovic advanced Wednesday by beating Igor Andreev 6-3, 6-3, 6-3. Nadal impressed friend and mentor Carlos Moya by winning 6-4, 6-3, 6-0.

"There are just a few players who cannot just beat him, but even get a set from him," Moya said. "Federer's one of them, and Djokovic can be one of them."

"Djokovic is a guy that is improving a lot. He's very complete player, and he's playing very well on any kind of surface, and he has all the shots. So I think he has the game to give Nadal some trouble."

Win or lose, Djokovic has helped Serbia make a splash at Roland Garros. The nation had three Grand Slam semifinalists for the first time, with Jelena Jankovic and Ana Ivanovic reaching the women's final four.

Aside from nine-time Grand Slam champion Monica Seles, Serbia touts a modest tennis tradition.

Djokovic, Jankovic and Ivanovic were born in Belgrade but left the war-ravaged region to train elsewhere—Djokovic in Germany and Italy.

"I cannot explain why all these players came up together at the top of the world at the same time," Djokovic said. *AP*

At the first sign of hairloss, come to Svenson.

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Pacman five stuns Pagadian

GENERAL SANTOS CITY—BOXING HERO Manny Pacquiao's MP Pacman GenSan pulled a big suprise in the ongoing Spring Cooking Oil-NBC National Cup basketball tournament Wednesday night by edging the Pagadian Explorers, 66-63, at the Lagao gym.

Jeffrey Locsin produced big plays at crunchtime to help raise GenSan's record to 4-4.

GenSan trailed from the start as ex-pro Nelson Asaytono waxed hot for Mayor Sammy Co's Explorers. But Pacquiao' boys stayed within striking distance and finally struck hard in the playoff period to deal Pagadian its sixth loss in 13 games.

"This was a test of character for us," said GenSan coach Ramon Pido. "*Hindi kami nag-give up*. Collectively, our team rose above the challenge."

The scores:

GENSAN 66—Locsin 14, Ramos 9, Berami 8, Recustodio 7, Coronado 5, Menor 4, Deligero 4, Medalla 4, Sumampong 3, Celiz 2, Tadena 2, Denisson 2, Mejorada 0, Farochillen 0.

PAGADIAN 63—Asaytono 23, Orquillas 12, Daja 8, Mamaclay 8, Saludsod 7, Villaver 3, Huelar 2, Sinco 0, Pamaran 0, Ayuk 0, Quilo 0, Cortez 0.

Quarters: 11-19, 30-30, 44-50, 66-63

Curlin Belmont top favorite

ELMONT, NEW YORK—PREAKNESS WINNER Curlin was installed as the 6-5 favorite Wednesday after drawing the third post for Saturday's 139th running of the Belmont Stakes.

Trying to become the third horse in seven years to win both the Preakness and Belmont, Curlin will have to take on just six other rivals in the one-and-a-half mile race.

Point Given in 2001 and Afleet Alex in 2005 took the Preakness and Belmont after coming up short in the Kentucky Derby.

Curlin, who finished third in the Kentucky Derby, is trained by Steve Asmussen and will have Robby Albarado in the irons.

The second choice at 5-2 is Hard Spun, who placed second in the Derby and third in the Preakness. He got the sixth post with Garrett Gomez in the irons for trainer Larry Jones.

While some of the luster of the third jewel of US racing's Triple Crown may have been lost without Derby winner Street Sense, who was nipped at the wire in the Preakness by Curlin, the fabulous filly Rags to Riches may have brought some excitement back.

Rags to Riches is trying to become the first of her sex to win the Belmont in 102 years. *AFP*

Ducks best Senators, seize first Stanley Cup

ANAHEIM, CALIFORNIA—THE ANAHEIM DUCKS captured their first National Hockey League title in their 14-year history with a 6-2 victory over the Ottawa Senators on Wednesday night, ending the series in five games in front of the home folks yet again.

For the first time, the Stanley Cup resides in California and at the expense of Canada, which hasn't boasted a winner since Montreal in 1993.

"Canada loves their hockey, and from what I heard out there, we have quite a few fans who love their hockey out here, too," said captain Scott Niedermayer, a four-time champion from British Columbia and this year's Conn Smythe Trophy winner.

Calgary, Edmonton and now Ottawa—in its first trip since the Senators were reborn in 1992—each had a chance the past three seasons only to be done in by a United States club from the sun belt. *AP*

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Turn to page B6 to find what's new with GCASH

Forex reserves hit all-time high of $25.8B

Record level reached even after gov't prepaid debt

By Michelle V. Remo

THE COUNTRY'S GROSS international reserves (GIR) hit $25.8 billion as of end-May, registering a new all-time high, as more investments and remittances from abroad continue to flow into the country.

The GIR, which is the country's amount of foreign currency holdings kept at the central bank, in April settled at the previous historic high of $25.027 billion.

The BSP said the latest GIR figure kept the country on track to meet, if not surpass, the projected $26 billion by the end of this year.

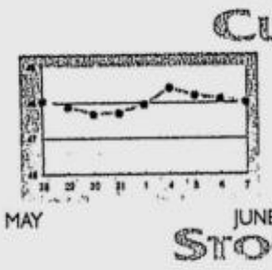
Besides inflows of foreign investments and remittances, the BSP said, the increase in the GIR was also boosted by the central bank's income from its foreign exchange operations and investments offshore.

GIR measures the country's ability to

FOREX/B5

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES



PESO-DOLLAR RATE

₱46.01 = $1

As of 5 p.m., June 7, 2007

STOCK MARKET

Shares close 1.17% lower

SHARE PRICES YESterday closed 1.17 percent lower on profit-taking, following a slump on Wall Street overnight amid concerns over the outlook for US inflation and interest rates, dealers said.

SHARES/B5

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX

(See stock market report on Page B2)

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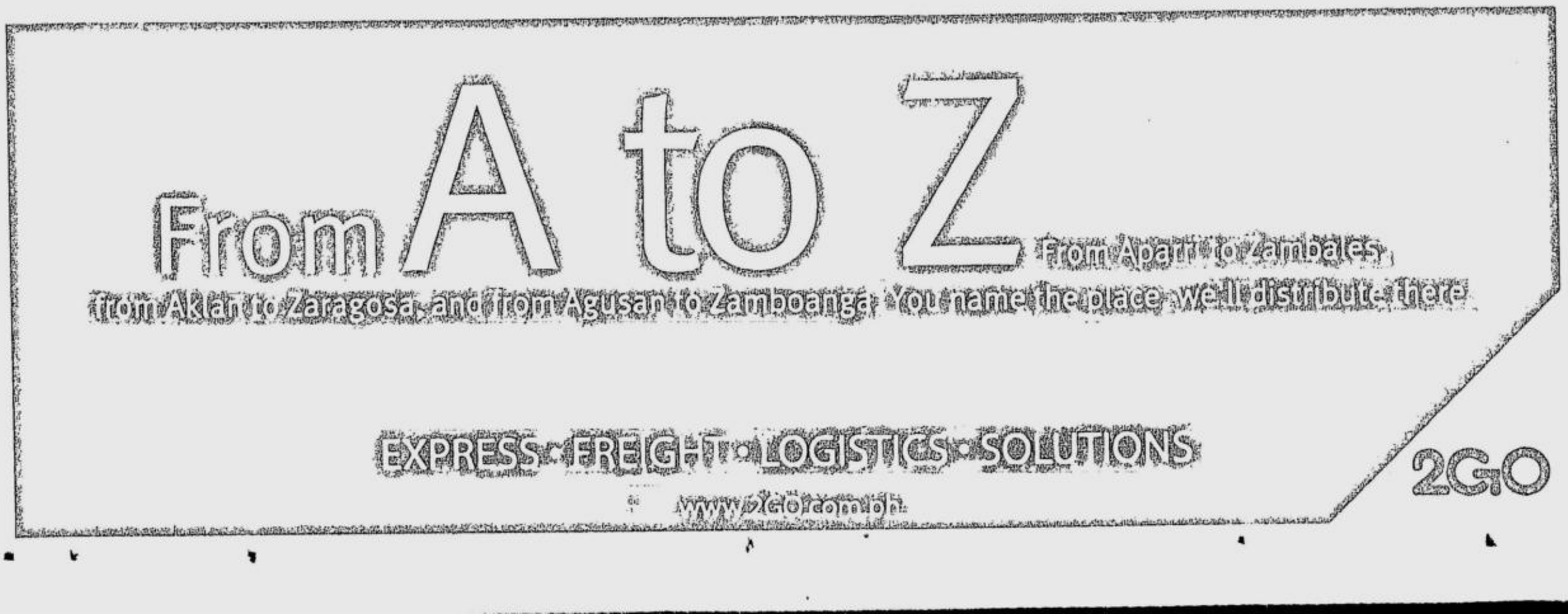

SMC fund sells PSE stake to UK firm

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

THE SAN MIGUEL CORP. Retirement Plan, the employee pension fund of food and beverage giant San Miguel Corp., has sold its entire 9-percent stake in the Philippine Stock Exchange to a London-based investment fund, raising roughly P902 million in the process, according to the PSE.

Based on a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange yesterday, London investment fund GLG Emerging Markets Special Situation Fund bought 1.395 million PSE shares priced at between P605.41 and P651.81 apiece. The deals were brokered by JP Morgan.

The PSE yesterday closed at P615 apiece.

Based on the PSE's top 100 stockholders' report as of March 31, the SMC Retirement Plan owned 1.39 million shares.

In 2004, the SMC fund, along with the Government Service Insurance System, ATR Group and Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. bought PSE shares for P119.50 a share.

Sources said other foreign investors are now inquiring for other PSE blocks up for sale.

At present, 35.3 percent of the PSE are held by stockbrokers. Under the law, brokers should shed off 15 percent to comply with a 20-percent industry limit. The creation of a law that strove to protect the interest of minority shareholders forced brokers to cede control of the bourse to other investors.

GLG Emerging Markets Special Situations Fund is one of several firms managed by hedge fund GLG Partners, one of the largest in the world.

DATO Dr. Mohd Ajib Anuar, president of the Malaysian Chamber of Mines, introduce members of his country's delegation during the Asia Pacific Mining Conference and Exhibition at the Makati Shangri-La in Makati City. An Australian mining firm is the latest to announce its investment plan for the country. INQUIRER PHOTO/RUDY ESPERAS

Aussie mining firm to invest $600M

By Amy R. Remo

AUSTRALIA'S RUSINA Mining Ltd. plans to invest $600 million for a heap leaching processing facility in Zambales and a nickel smelting plant in Semirara Island.

At the sidelines of the 7th Asia Pacific Mining Conference and Exhibition, Rusina CEO and managing director said that the mining firm's partner, European Nickel Plc, had already infused $10 million for a feasibility study on the heap leaching facility.

In all, the facility would require capital expenditure of $500 million, while the smelting plant would require $100 million.

Gregory said that, by putting up the two plants, the firm would be in a position to provide value added services.

"Aside from just shipping nickel ore, we can now process it here through these two facilities," he said. "We have enough nickel for these two projects."

The facilities, he added, are meant to ensure that the firm's operating costs would be kept within manageable levels in the event of a slump in nickel prices.

Gregory also said that, by the third quarter of this year, Rusina would ship to China a trial bulk of 50,000 tons of nickel ore from its Acoje nickel mine in Zambales.

Rusina, through Zambales Diversified Metals Corp., develops and processes nickel from the Acoje mines, which is estimated to have reserves of up to 33 million tons.

Rusina earlier formed a joint venture with DMCI Holdings to put up Zambales Diversified.

The company recently acquired an environmental compliance certificate for the commercial operations of the Acoje project.

"We are planning to increase our volume of production to two million tons from our current target of 1 million tons," Gregory also said.

Part of the revenue from the nickel shipments, he added, would be used to explore and drill for platinum, and eventually chromite.

SM unit to raise ₱250M in share offer

SM DEVELOPMENT CORP. (SMDC), the residential development arm of mall czar Henry Sy, is planning to sell 50 million shares, the proceeds of which will be used as working capital, SMDC president Roger Cabunag said.

At yesterday's price of P5.10, the company's treasury shares may fetch roughly P250 million.

The company is still studying whether it will sell the entire tranche, Cabunag said.

SMDC yesterday disclosed it has sold 300,000 shares at P5.30 apiece.

SMDC also said before that it had raised P5.68 million from the sale of one million treasury shares last May 10.

SMDC earlier said it would earmark almost P7 billion in three major residential projects over the next three years.

Cabunag said that SMDC's three big-ticket projects launched this year will cost: P5.4 billion for the Grass Residences, a seven-tower condominium cluster on North Edsa; P1.4 billion for the Berkeley Residences, a 35-story high condominium on Katipunan Avenue in Quezon City; and P261 million for Lindenwood Residences, a 22-ha subdivision near Alabang.

Lindenwood is a partnership with the Madrigal family, the landowner of the project. The subdivision will offer 390 lots, each averaging about 350 sq. m. and carrying a price tag ranging from P3.5 to P7 million.

The subdivision is a few minutes drive away from SM Southmall and will be near a new SM mall that will rise in Muntinlupa by the first half of 2008.

SMDC chair Henry Sy Jr. also said that the company is studying the possibility of putting up a middle-rise condominium on its 14-ha property in Tagaytay. *Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson*

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of June 7, 2007)

52-WEEK HIGH	52-WEEK LOW	STOCK	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
		BANKS					
17.5	5.1	Asiatrust Development Bank Inc.	12	12	11.75	11.75	[illegible]
71	30.8	Banco de Oro-EPCI Inc.	60	60.5	59.5	60.5	1,443,700
73	42.5	Bank of the Philippine Islands	68	70	68	68.5	1,104,100
936	930	China Banking Corp.	936	936	930	936	[illegible]
20	18.18	Citystate Savings Bank	19.75	19.75	19.75	19.75	1,300
0.93	0.30	Export and Industry Bank, Inc.	0.63	0.63	0.62	0.62	0,630,000
68.5	29	Metropolitan Bank and Trust Co.	66	66	64	64	6,004,400
66.5	30.5	Philippine National Bank	62	62	62	62	8,200
38.67	14.13	Rizal Commercial Banking Corp.	31.5	32.5	31	32.5	2,068,400
90	41	Security Bank Corp.	80.5	83	80.5	82	358,000
66	40.75	Union Bank of the Philippines	63	64	63	64	[illegible]
		OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
0.85	0.6	Bankard Inc.	0.61	0.61	0.6	0.61	390,000
8.7	1.8	CitisecOnline.com Inc.	8.3	8.7	8.2	8.5	2,107,000
6.6	3.8	Filipino Fund Inc.	6.3	6.3	6.3	6.3	21,000
1,700.00	1,000.00	Manulife Financial Corp.	1,080.00	1,080.00	1,080.00	1,080.00	010
5	4.10	National Reinsurance Corp. of the Phils.	4.20	4.25	4.15	4.15	0,830,000
2.9	0.88	PCI Leasing and Finance Inc.	2.8	2.85	2.70	2.8	536,000
1,000.00	210	The Philippine Stock Exchange, Inc.	620	620	615	615	144,000
2,200.00	1,000.00	Sun Life Financial Inc.	2,100.00	2,100.00	2,100.00	2,100.00	10
1.94	1.00	Vantage Corp.	1.00	1.00	1.05	1.20	[illegible]
		ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
64.5	41	First Gen Corp.	64	64	62.5	62.5	570,800
86	40.5	First Phil. Holdings Corp.	86	86.5	83.5	86.5	1,300,300
12.75	6.6	Manila Water Co. Inc.	12	12.25	12	12.25	3,407,400
102	19.5	Manila Electric Co. "A"	97	97	95	96.5	132,000
104	20.25	Manila Electric Co. "B"	97	97	95	96	1,041,000
6.8	4.1	PNOC Energy Development Corp.	6.1	6.1	5.8	6	10,003,000
6.7	3.30	Petron Corp.	5.2	5.2	5.1	5.2	4,700,000
2.44	1.0	Salcon Power Corp.	2.42	2.44	2.42	2.44	70,000
1.82	0.62	Trans-Asia Oil and Energy Dev't Corp.	1.55	1.56	1.54	1.56	[illegible]
		FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
5.8	2.55	Alaska Milk Corp.	5.3	5.4	[illegible]	5.3	[illegible]
2.05	1.08	Alliance Tuna International Inc.	2.2	2.2	2.10	2.2	1,430,000
26.5	10.5	Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	20	20	20.5	20.5	6,200
61	30	Jollibee Foods Corp.	56	60	55	55	470,000
1.82	0.77	RFM Corp.	1.42	1.5	1.42	1.5	1,000,000
80	61	San Miguel Corp. "A"	67	67	66.5	67	95,600
80	68.5	San Miguel Corp. "B"	73	73.5	73	73	100,000
0.51	0.2	Swift Foods Inc.	0.43	0.43	0.41	0.41	70,000
27	15.25	Universal Robina Corp.	16.25	17.25	16.25	17	10,282,[illegible]
		CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
5.8	1.07	EEI Corp.	5.5	5.5	5.5	5.5	[illegible]
9.2	4.2	Holcim Philippines Inc.	8.4	8.5	8.4	8.5	102,000
7	1.7	Republic Cement Corp.	5.8	6.0	5.4	5.9	32,000
2	0.245	Southeast Asia Cement Holdings Inc.	1.82	1.82	1.92	1.82	1,094,000
		CHEMICALS					
6.3	1.42	Chemrez Technologies Inc.	5.6	5.6	5.4	5.5	6,2[illegible]
0.82	0.5	Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	0.74	0.74	0.74	0.74	[illegible]
		DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
		HOLDING FIRMS					
3.9	1.7	A. Soriano Corp.	3.65	3.75	3.65	3.7	[illegible]
0.11	0.022	AJO.net Holdings Inc.	0.1	0.105	0.095	0.1	56,200,000
1.14	0.17	APC Group Inc.	0.98	0.99	0.95	0.98	37,000,000
3.6	1.4	ATN Holdings Inc. "A"	1.9	2.04	1.9	1.96	252,000
3.3	1.48	ATN Holdings Inc. "B"	2.2	2.4	2.2	2.4	88,000
0.018	0.006	Abacus Cons. Res. and Hold'gs Inc. "A"	0.013	0.013	0.012	0.012	52,100,000
0.019	0.0065	Abacus Cons. Res. and Hold'gs Inc. "B"	0.014	0.014	0.014	0.014	1,500,000
9.7	4.85	Aboitiz Equity Ventures Inc.	8.9	8.9	8.8	8.9	1,656,000
0.017	0.0085	Alcorn Gold Resources Corp.	0.016	0.016	0.015	0.016	165,600,000
1.04	0.45	Alsons Consolidated Resources Inc.	0.9	0.94	0.89	0.89	2,830,000
2.75	0.83	Anglo-Philippine Holdings Corp.	2.55	2.75	2.55	2.75	13,527,000
5.6	0.8	Aries Prime Resources Inc.	2.8	2.8	2.65	2.65	89,000
16	5.6	Atok-Big Wedge Co. Inc. "B"	8.7	13	8.7	13	3,000
12.75	4.5	Atok-Big Wedge Co. Inc. "A"	10	12.75	10	11	11,600
570	272.92	Ayala Corp.	545	545	525	540	297,540
12.25	6.96	Bacnotan Consolidated Industries Inc.	12	12.25	12	12.25	22,500
6.9	0.7	Balabac Resources and Holdings Co. Inc.	4.55	4.6	4.55	4.55	230,000
5.2	0.97	Benpres Holdings Corp.	4.9	4.9	4.8	4.85	18,639,000
9.8	3.25	DMCI Holdings Inc.	9.5	9.6	9.4	9.6	2,443,000
6.7	2.55	Filinvest Development Corp.	6.4	6.4	6.3	6.4	426,000
3.55	1.14	House of Investments Inc.	2.8	2.8	2.8	2.8	200,000
14.5	5.3	JG Summit Holdings Inc.	12	12	11.75	12	1,138,600
0.47	0.185	MEDCO Holdings Inc.	0.43	0.45	0.42	0.45	2,570,000
0.88	0.1	Mabuhay Holdings Corp.	0.71	0.77	0.71	0.77	520,000
28	0.88	Magnum Holdings Inc.	22	28	21.75	27.5	8,758,000
8.4	0.19	Multitech Investments Corp.	6.9	8.4	6.7	8.3	29,100,000
5.4	1.2	PAL Holdings Inc.	3.75	3.95	3.75	3.8	191,000
0.03	0.009	Pacifica Inc. "A"	0.027	0.029	0.026	0.029	256,200,000
0.63	0.155	Prime Orion Philippines Inc.	0.57	0.6	0.57	0.58	6,950,000
450	205	SM Investments Corp.	422.5	422.5	410	415	233,730
2.2	0.6	Seafront Resources Corp.	1.76	1.76	1.72	1.72	208,000
0.73	0.115	Sinophil Corp.	0.61	0.63	0.6	0.62	60,570,000
0.85	0.51	Solid Group Inc.	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	530,000
1.6	0.68	South China Resources Inc.	1.6	1.6	1.5	1.54	978,000
0.35	0.08	Wellex Industries Inc.	0.28	0.29	0.27	0.27	9,000,000
0.58	0.155	Zeus Holdings Inc.	0.4	0.43	0.4	0.43	2,050,000
		PROPERTY					
2.16	0.75	A. Brown Co. Inc.	1.86	1.86	1.84	1.86	[illegible]
0.62	0.3	Araneta Properties Inc.	0.59	0.59	0.58	0.56	650,000
17.5	8.54	Ayala Land Inc.	17.25	17.25	16.75	16.75	10,226,900
1.76	0.95	Belle Corp.	1.64	1.7	1.64	1.7	9,711,000
4.5	1.18	C and P Homes Inc.	3.95	4.2	3.95	4.2	1,927,000
4.7	1.8	Cebu Holdings Inc.	4.5	4.5	4.45	4.5	13,208,000
2.9	1	Cityland Development Corp.	2.65	2.8	2.5	2.8	12,000
0.67	0.24	Crown Equities Inc.	0.64	0.65	0.64	0.65	4,910,000
0.6	0.165	Cyber Bay Corp.	0.57	0.58	0.56	0.57	16,490,000
0.99	0.44	Empire East Land Holdings Inc.	0.8	0.8	0.79	0.79	18,560,000
0.31	0.027	Ever Gotesco Resources and Hold'gs Inc.	0.28	0.29	0.27	0.28	19,660,000
1.12	0.38	Fil-Estate Land Inc.	1.04	1.08	0.99	1	45,610,000
2.04	0.93	Filinvest Land Inc.	1.98	1.98	1.92	1.94	14,854,000
0.016	0.0038	Interport Resources Corp. "A"	0.013	0.013	0.013	0.013	39,800,000
0.016	0.005	Interport Resources Corp. "B"	0.014	0.014	0.014	0.014	40,000,000
1.8	0.74	Keppel Philippines Properties Inc.	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7	10,000
0.69	0.2	Kuok Phil. Properties Inc.	0.41	0.41	0.4	0.41	3,660,000
0.99	0.18	MRC Allied Industries Inc.	0.79	0.85	0.79	0.82	31,240,000
4.25	1.26	Megaworld Corp.	3.95	4	3.9	4	41,749,000
6.4	1.5	Metro Pacific Investments Corp.	4.35	4.35	4.2	4.2	446,000
0.42	0.1	Phil. Estates Corp.	0.36	0.37	0.34	0.35	8,970,000
0.87	0.25	Philippine Realty and Holdings Corp.	0.63	0.65	0.62	0.63	12,060,000
4.2	1.1	Polar Property Holdings Corp.	4	4.2	4	4	214,000
23	9.6	Robinson Land Corp.	20	20	19.75	19.75	866,100
5.4	1.23	SM Development Corp.	5.2	5.2	5.1	5.1	638,000
14	6.9	SM Prime Holdings Inc.	13.75	13.75	13.25	13.25	4,543,700
0.96	0.51	Suntrust Home Developers Inc.	0.77	0.78	0.76	0.77	1,980,000
0.35	0.05	Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.3	0.33	0.3	0.32	27,220,000
1.74	0.3	Zipporah Realty Holdings Inc.	1.36	1.56	1.36	1.56	8,3[illegible]
		MEDIA					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
		TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
2.12	1.12	Digital Telecommunications Phils. Inc.	1.52	1.56	1.52	1.54	2,499,000
1,445.00	820	Globe Telecom Inc.	1,435.00	1,435.00	1,405.00	1,415.00	27,370
2,820.00	1,700.00	Phil. Long Distance Telephone Co.	2,590.00	2,590.00	2,525.00	2,560.00	403,390
7.9	3.1	Pilipino Telephone Corp.	6.8	[illegible]	[illegible]	6.9	[illegible]
		INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
0.39	0.155	Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.28	0.29	[illegible]	0.28	[illegible]
9.4	2	Diversified Financial Network Inc.	8.7	9.4	8.7	9.4	160,000
7.6	2	IPVG Corp.	6.5	6.5	6.3	6.4	1,280,000
0.0525	0.0263	ISM Communications Corp.	0.046	0.046	0.042	0.042	74,500,000
0.043	0.011	Imperial Resources Inc. "A"	0.038	0.04	0.038	0.039	49,400,000
2.9	1.8	Ionics Inc.	2.16	2.16	2.12	2.12	283,000
0.0875	0.038	Island Information and Technology Inc.	0.0775	0.0875	0.0775	0.0825	90,700,000
1.84	1.12	Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.6	1.84	1.6	1.82	2,985,000
0.06	0.027	Philweb Corp.	0.05	0.0525	0.05	0.0525	215,000,000
5.8	1	Transpacific Broadband Group Int'l. Inc.	2.26	2.3	2.18	2.18	1,161,000
		TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
1.88	1.14	Aboitiz Transport System Corp.	1.66	1.72	1.66	1.72	953,000
6.8	2.5	Asian Terminals Inc.	6	6	6	6	75,000
32	12.5	Int'l Container Terminal Services Inc.	28	28	27.5	28	352,700
2.14	0.86	Keppel Philippines Marine Inc.	1.9	1.9	1.88	1.88	893,000
1.74	0.8	Lorenzo Shipping Corp.	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	50,000
		HOTEL & LEISURE					
4.25	1.26	Leisure and Resorts World Corp.	3.8	3.8	3.7	3.75	976,000
0.95	0.18	Premiere Entertainment Productions Inc.	0.9	0.95	0.88	0.95	25,860,000
1.2	0.42	Waterfront Philippines Inc.	1.08	1.1	1.04	1.08	11,977,000
		DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
5.2	1.84	Macroasia Corp.	4.95	4.95	4.85	4.9	1,22[illegible]
17.25	13	Pacific Online Systems Corp.	16.5	16.5	16	16.25	296,900
30	9.5	Paxys Inc.	24.75	25	24.75	25	291,000
		MINING					
0.018	0.007	Abra Mining and Industrial Corp.	0.014	0.015	0.014	0.014	620,000,000
7.6	3	Apex Mining Co. Inc. "A"	6.4	6.4	6.3	6.3	1,074,000
7.7	3	Apex Mining Co. Inc. "B"	6.6	6.6	6.5	6.5	177,000
21.25	5.6	Atlas Cons. Mining and Dev't Corp.	18.75	19	18.75	18.75	4,504,900
14.25	8.7	Benguet Corp. "A"	13.5	13.5	13.5	13.5	29,000
4	1.7	Dizon Copper Silver Mines Inc.	3.6	3.85	3.4	3.8	547,000
2.85	0.0802	GEOGRACE Resources Philippines Inc.	2.65	2.85	2.55	2.7	124,589,000
0.35	0.215	Lepanto Consolidated Mining Co. "A"	0.28	0.28	0.27	0.27	68,450,000
0.42	0.225	Lepanto Consolidated Mining Co. "B"	0.32	0.32	0.31	0.31	16,920,000
0.038	0.0154	Manila Mining Corp. "A"	0.036	0.036	0.035	0.036	90,300,000
0.041	0.017	Manila Mining Corp. "B"	0.038	0.038	0.038	0.038	190,300,000
0.024	0.0075	Omico Corp.	0.019	0.021	0.019	0.02	2,084,400,000
6.4	2.65	Philex Mining Corp.	6	6	5.9	6	7,785,000
30	14.75	Semirara Mining Corp.	27	27.5	27	27	74,000
1.26	0.25	United Paragon Mining Corp.	1.16	1.26	1.16	1.2	5,407,000
1.8	0.41	Vulcan Industrial and Mining Corp.	1.5	1.54	[illegible]	1.52	[illegible]
		OIL					
[illegible]	[illegible]	Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.41	0.42	[illegible]	0.41	[illegible]
0.026	0.008	Oriental Pet. and Minerals Corp. "A"	0.022	0.025	0.022	0.024	856,000,000
0.026	0.009	Oriental Pet. and Minerals Corp. "B"	0.023	0.026	0.023	0.026	404,700,000
14.62	9	Petroenergy Resources Corp.	10.25	10.75	10.25	10.5	207,100
0.028	0.0089	The Philodrill Corp.	0.027	0.028	0.026	0.026	1,262,200,000

BY INQUIRER RESEARCH

SOURCE: TECHINISTOCK

CURRENCIES

June 7, 2007 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.739481	1.000000	45.7210
Japan	Yen	0.006092	0.008238	0.3766
United Kingdom	Pound	1.473859	1.993100	91.1265
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.094707	0.128072	5.8556
Switzerland	Franc	0.607177	0.821085	37.5408
Canada	Dollar	0.695982	0.941176	43.0315
Singapore	Dollar	0.483321	0.653595	29.8830
Australia	Dollar	0.618657	0.836610	38.2506
Bahrain	Dinar*	1.961644	2.652731	121.2855
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.197190	0.266660	12.1920
Brunei	Dollar	0.481747	0.651466	29.7857
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000084	0.000114	0.0052
Thailand	Baht	0.022518	0.030451	1.3923
UAE	Dirham	0.201351	0.272287	12.4492
EU	Euro	1.000000	1.352300	61.8285
Korea	Won	0.000798	0.001079	0.0493
China	Yuan**	0.096775	0.130869	5.9835
Argentina	Peso	0.240873	0.325733	14.8928
Brazil	Real	0.381825	0.516342	23.6077
Denmark	Kroner	0.134297	0.181610	8.3034
India	Rupee	0.018386	0.024863	1.1368
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.217271	0.293815	13.4335
Mexico	New Peso	0.068445	0.092558	4.2318
New Zealand	Dollar	0.555041	0.750582	34.3174
Norway	Kroner	0.123768	0.167372	7.6524
Pakistan	Rupee	0.012204	0.016504	0.7546
South Africa	Rand	0.103946	0.140566	6.4268
Sweden	Kroner	0.107166	0.144919	6.6258
Syria	Pound	0.014245	0.019264	0.8808
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.022402	0.030294	1.3851
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000345	0.000466	0.0213

Source: Reuters' forex closing prices as of NY time—June 5, 2007
* Various banks in Bahrain as quoted in Reuters Screen
** Asian time closing rate as of June 5, 2007

Strong peso eroding many families' income

'Boom' seen causing much pain

INVESTORS CHEER as stocks climb to record highs and the economy surges ahead at the fastest pace in 17 years.

But the booming growth is also lifting the Philippine peso, which is eroding the income of Filipinos like Hazel Gonzales, who depends on money sent home by her husband working as a mechanic in Kuwait.

"The effect on us is really big," she lamented. While her husband has been remitting the same portion of his salary, the stronger peso means she is receiving 18 percent less than when he arrived in Kuwait in November.

"It is good for the Philippines, because it is a signal that the economy is doing well," she said. "But for us, it means that my husband's remittance, which used to be, for example, P15,000 is now down to P12,000."

Gonzales and her two children have had to cut down on spending, including dining out, and her two-year-old son switched to a cheaper brand of infant formula.

But she said she looks at the silver lining: An improving economy could mean better local wages that would allow her husband to come home.

That's the irony of the current economic boom in the Philippines. Over time, it may lead to a stronger and steadier economic growth that will benefit all Filipinos. But because so many Filipinos depend on money sent home by relatives working abroad, for the moment, the boom is causing them considerable pain.

"In a strange way, we are being punished for our own success," said a briefing paper by the National Economic Development Authority, a government agency.

Gonzales' husband is one of about 8 million Filipinos—or 10 percent of the population—working overseas. Last year, they sent home a record US$12.8 billion.

About 40 million people, or almost half of the country, depend on remittances to pay for housing, school, food, health expenses.

The central bank on Tuesday expressed concern over the rapid appreciation of the peso, which has risen 6.8 percent against the US dollar so far this year. It said wild swings in the foreign exchange can disrupt local markets.

But Bangko Sentral Gov. Amando Tetangco said authorities would continue to allow market forces to determine the rate.

Investor confidence, meanwhile, has grown on optimism about the outlook for corporate profits and the economy, which expanded 6.9 percent in the first quarter, the strongest growth since the first quarter of 1990. Exports have grown 13 percent so far this year, and foreign direct investment, which grew 26 percent last year, is pouring in.

The 30-company Philippine Stock Exchange Index has risen 21.5 percent so far this year and hit a record 3,622.94 on Monday.

One reason for the investor enthusiasm is the sharp reduction in the government's budget deficit since President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo in 2005 implemented an expanded value-added tax and other revenue-boosting measures. That means the government is less constrained to spend money on infrastructure projects.

The government expects the 2007 deficit to stay below P63 billion. *AP*

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PRULINK — PRU LIFE U.K.

Investments of Variable Life Insurance Contracts	Current Week June 06, 2007	Last Week May 29, 2007
Bond Fund - Peso	1.62040	1.62705
Managed Fund - Peso	1.91643	1.90313
Growth Fund - Peso	1.94188	1.87298
Bond Fund - US Dollar	1.3932	1.3954

* Note: These investments of variable life insurance contracts are not mutual funds. Life insurance products are regulated by the Insurance Commission.

INSULAR LIFE — Wealth Builder and Wealth Secure

Investment Funds of Wealth Builder & Wealth Secure	UNIT PRICES (In Php) June 4, 2007	May 28, 2007
Fixed Income Fund	1.280121	1.280630
Balanced Fund	1.479109	1.453197
Equity Fund	1.807358	1.746250

These investment funds are specific to variable life insurance contracts and are not considered mutual funds. Life insurance products are regulated by the Insurance Commission.

The weekly unit prices are also available at www.insularlife.com.ph.

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(3) Each fund has its own investment policy and objective to suit clients' investment requirements, horizon and risk preference. A copy of the Declaration of Trust and Plan Rules of each particular fund is available at the principal office of the Trustee.
(4) A Trust fee of 1.5% p.a. and, early redemption fee of 1.0% for redemptions made within the 90-day minimum holding period, applies to the Fund.
(5) All funds managed by BPI Asset Management are Trust and/or Investment Management funds which DO NOT carry any guarantee of income or principal, and are NOT covered by the Philippine Deposit Insurance Corporation (PDIC). Past performance is likewise not a guarantee of future results.

Amendments to Epira rules OKd

Regulatory lag addressed

By Abigail L. Ho

THE JOINT CONGRESSIONAL Power Commission yesterday approved proposed amendments to the implementing rules and regulations of RA 9136, or the Electric Power Industry Reform Act of 2001, to shield consumers from added costs and to ensure the viability of the power sector.

In yesterday's JCPC meeting, the last for the 13th Congress, Rule 3 Section 4e of the Epira IRR was amended to allow distribution utilities, such as the Manila Electric Co., to automatically recover generation- and foreign exchange-related costs periodically.

The amendments are hope to remove the "regulatory lag" that had caused Meralco's under-recoveries to balloon to as much as P12.2 billion as of end-April.

Failure to immediately recover its costs had also prompted the power distributor to remit only partial payments to its power suppliers. Starting last month, Meralco deferred its payments to National Transmission Corp.

In a presentation, Energy Regulatory Commission Chair Rodolfo Albano Jr. said the implementation of an automatic recovery mechanism did not mean that utilities could just pass on any costs to customers.

Cost recoveries would still be subject to ERC verification, and wrong applications could mean penalties for the utilities, he said.

For his part, Energy Secretary Raphael Lotilla said the amendment of the Epira IRR would not only allow distribution utilities to remain viable, but would also shield consumers from the burden of additional costs.

"With the regulatory lag, there's an added cost to customers. Charges are just postponed. Consumers are also subjected to additional costs because of interests on those deferred charges," he said. "We're balancing the need for consumer protection, observance of due process, and enabling businesses to be financially viable."

The Supreme Court last year ruled that Rule 3 Section 4e of the Epira IRR covered "any application or petition for rate adjustment or any relief affecting the consumers."

"It should be made clear that the adjustment of rates based on purchased power or fuel adjustment costs should not or in no case be automatic," the high tribunal said.

This prompted the ERC to suspend the automatic recovery mechanism that Meralco had been implementing since November 2004.

Without amending the Epira IRR rule on which the high court based its decision, Albano said all other distribution utilities and electric cooperatives would also "have to discontinue all their automatic adjustments, not just in generation."

He said that if all 140 power distributors in the country would apply monthly to adjust their generation rates, the ERC would be swamped with 1,680 applications and 1,680 hearings in various localities each year.

"At a rate of one decision per day, including Saturdays, Sundays and holidays, it will take the ERC 4.5 years to decide on the generation cost recovery applications filed in one year," he said.

USING CREDIT WISELY
Citibank Phils. country business manager Mark Jones chats with Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Governor Amando Tetangco after presenting him a copy of "Use Credit Wisely," a 52-page book published by Citibank. The book contains useful information on better money and credit management.

Insurers opposing IC's surety bond rule

By Michelle V. Remo

NON-LIFE INSURANCE COMPANIES have opposed a directive of the Insurance Commission that tightened its solvency requirement, saying this could displace about 11,000 licensed individual sales agents from work.

The Philippine Insurers and Reinsurers Association (Pira) is asking the commission to reconsider a provision of Circular 27-2006, which requires insurance brokers/agents to secure surety bonds for their premium receivables.

The bond's amount should be equivalent to 25 percent of collectible premiums, or P1.5 million, whichever is higher.

Without a surety bond the amount of premium receivables would not be included in computing the insurance firms' assets. This could drag down their solvency level, making it more difficult for insurance firms to meet the government's solvency ratio requirement.

Mario Valdes, general manager of Pira, said securing a bond from a surety company requires the posting of collateral. The amount of collateral should be twice the amount of the bond being secured.

If the bond is P1.5 million, an insurance broker or agent should have a collateral worth P3 million.

"This could be easily met by (corporate) insurance brokers, but not by individual insurance sales agents," Valdes said.

"Requiring a surety bond will be disadvantageous to individual sales agents who might be out of work," Valdes explained to the Inquirer.

In a statement, Pira complained about the Insurance Commission's "tendency to issue directives without consulting members of the insurance industry."

The group said many small and provincial agencies would be disenfranchised from the industry with the new requirement.

The Insurance Commission, responding to Pira's position, said tightening the solvency requirements was aimed at protecting consumers by ensuring that insurance firms were liquid enough to service claims.

Insurance Commissioner Evangeline Escobillo said this was also a way to further develop the insurance industry and expand the market.

Season for smuggling

COMMENTARY

By Ernesto M. Ordonez

"FOR EVERYTHING, THERE IS A season. A time to be born, and a time to die. A time to laugh, and a time to cry ..."

For smuggling onions, June to July is the season for smuggling. This is the time when onion smugglers are reborn after a year of hibernation, and when the farmers fear the possible death of their industry. It is the time when the smugglers laugh and the farmers cry.

Last June 2, the opposite happened. Led by Agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap and Customs Commissioner Horacio Morales, and aided by Customs Director Jairus Paguntalan and Intelligence Chief Fernandino Tuazon, a raid was conducted in two sites in Navotas. This yielded 12 containers of smuggled onions from China worth P12 million. This time, the farmers laughed and the smugglers cried.

The farmer leaders who participated in the raid came from the onion growing areas of Nueva Ecija. They were led by Alyansa Agrikultura leaders Rolly Manangan of the Katipunan ng mga Samahang Magsisibuyas sa Nueva Ecija (Kasamne) and Magtanggol Alvarez of the Union of Onion Growers and Traders (Ugat).

June and July are the peak harvest months for onions in China. It is during this time that there is an onion oversupply, which allows Chinese onions to land in Metro Manila at only P12 per kilo. Such onion imports are allowed in the Philippines, provided they are covered by appropriate import permits. The permits are necessary to ensure that the products are free of pests and diseases that endanger the consumers' health and the local onion fields.

Since the cost of imported onions is half the price of local onions during this season, massive smuggling takes place. Unfortunately, this happens when we are also in an onion oversupply situation, thus driving the already low market price down further, causing massive losses for the onion farmers.

Fast response

Last May 22, at the regular bimonthly Alyansa Agrikultura meeting with Sec. Yap, Kasamne vice chair Rudy Leones and United Broilers and Raisers Association (Ubra) president Gregorio San Diego asked the DA to support the farmers' anti-smuggling drive.

Both Sec. Yap and Commissioner Morales should be commended because within two weeks, they showed swift action by catching onion smugglers in Navotas.

Ideally, these smuggled containers should have been apprehended before they left the Custom's territory. This is being done more often now, as the BOC just acquired 10 X-ray machines that detect an imported container's contents without opening it. Thus, smuggled goods hidden at the back of a container are now easily detected. The DA and the BOC do this inspection without private sector involvement.

During the June 2 raid, we informed Morales that in 2003, farmer leaders jointly inspected, with government personnel, the imported containers on a random basis. This provided a check and balance system for the government inspection, and played a significant role in cutting the smuggling from 40 percent to less than 1 percent at that time. At the end of the raid, Morales committed to institute such a system.

Alyansa Agrikultra leaders recommended to take part in this random inspection are Rolly Manangan, Magtanggol Alvarez and Simya Lagos for vegetables; Gregorio San Diego for poultry; Albert Lim for hogs and livestock; Jaime Tadeo for rice; Butch Umengan for corn; Arsenio Tanchuling for fisheries, and Renato Florencio for fruits.

Inward-forward manifest

An added mechanism that may be even more powerful than the joint inspection calls for the BOC to provide the DA and the DTI copies of the inward-forward manifest (IFM) for agricultural and industrial goods, respectively. This was done before, but was stopped when the' Presidential Anti-Smuggling Task Force was abolished in August 2004. Since then, only the BOC has had access to these IFMs.

The IFM is a document that states the contents of imported cargo even before the cargo is unloaded in our ports. If the DA and DTI have copies of these IFMs, they can take preventive action.

Under a previous Custom's administration, a congressional hearing on onion smuggling was held. A subpoena was issued that resulted in the submission of a list of all onion IFMs. It was discovered that many IFMs had onion shipments without import permits. Most of these were successfully smuggled into the country. Had these IFMs been provided to the DA with farmer support, this massive smuggling would never have happened.

Outlook

With reforms such as those recommended here, prospects for anti-smuggling success look promising. With Morales and Yap supporting farmer participation in the anti-smuggling activities, with the proposed random inspection of imported cargo done jointly by the farmers and government personnel, and with copies of the IFMs being provided to DA, the smuggling season not only for onions but also for other agricultural products may be a thing of the past. When that time comes, the farmers will laugh, and the smugglers appropriately cry.

(The author is the chair of Agriwatch and former Cabinet secretary for Presidential Flagship Programs and Projects. For inquiries e-mail agriwatchphil @ yahoo.com or telefax (02)852-2112.

Republic of the Philippines
National Irrigation Administration
NIA Regional Office No. 10
Cagayan de Oro City

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID
Second Agrarian Reform Communities Development Project
(ARCDP II)

June 8, 2007

The Government of the Philippines has received a loan from World Bank towards the cost of Second Agrarian Reform Communities Development Project (ARCDP II) and it intends to apply part of the proceeds of this loan, together with the GOP counterpart funds, to payments under the contract for the Construction of Diversion Dam, Canal and Structures of Dalapang Communal Irrigation Project. Package 1 located at Dalapang, Liposong Capucao and Pantaon, Ozamiz City, Misamis Occidental under Contract no. RIRR 06-249-01 DAL-MO

The National Irrigation Administration (NIA) Regional Irrigation Office No. 10 Cagayan de Oro City, now invites sealed Bids from eligible Bidders for the Construction of Diversion Dam, Canal and Canal Structures of Main Canal at Sta 0+000-1+420 Construction of Main Canal and Canal Structures at Sta 1+420-5+140 Construction of Canals and Structures @ Sta 5+140-9+777.24 and Lat. A @ 0+000-4+892.60 under Contract No. RIRR 06-249-01 DAL-MO and is expected to be completed and delivered within 150 calendar days for each package from the date of the official start of the subproject.

DESCRIPTION OF WORKS:

PACKAGE I: Construction of Diversion Dam, Canal and Canal Structures of Main Canal Sta 0+000 – 1+420

	WORK ITEMS	Unit	Quantity
	I. DIVERSION DAM:		
100	Temp. Works, Mobilization and Demobilization	LS	1.00
300	Diversion and Care of River	LS	1.00
200	Clearing and Grubbing	Sq. m	475.00
600	Structure Excavation Mechanize with dewatering	Cu.m.	150.00
600	Structure Excavation Mechanize without dewatering	Cu.m.	670.00
1700	3,000 PSI Reinf. Concrete	Cu.m.	86.05
1000	Rubble Masonry	Cu.m	45.00
2100	Plain Boulder Riprap	Cu.m	16.00
2000	Filter Drain	Cu.m	10.00
1200	Structure Backfill	Cu.m	236.00
2000	Gravel Blanket	Cu.m	47.30
2700	Grouted Riprap	Cu.m	0.00
2300	Reinforcing Steel Bars		
	Furnishing of Materials	Kg	4,302.50
	Cut, Bend and Install	Kg	4,302.50
3600	Trashrack	Unit	1.00
3300	Stoplogs	Unit	2.00
	50 mm x 100 mm dia PVC pipe	Pc.	2.00
	100 mm x 100 mm dia PVC pipe	Pc.	6.00
	100 mm dia. 50 mm Tee Reducer	Pc.	10.00
	Furnish and Install 30 inch Dia RCP	Pc.	68.00
	Access Road		
	Road Surfacing	Cu.m.	336.00
	II. CANALIZATION:		
200	Clearing and Grubbing	Sq.m	4,280.00
400	Common Excavation	Cu.m.	10,604.70
	III. CANAL STRUCTURES:		
1700	3000 Psi Reinf. Conc	Cu.m.	740.01
600	Structure Excavation	Cu.m.	3,859.20
1200	Structure Backfill	Cu.m.	705.38
2000	RSB:		
	Furnishing of Materials	Kg	59,485.20
	Cut Bend & Placement of RSB	Kg	59,485.20
2400	PHI of 30' dia RCP	Pc.	5.00
	TERMINAL FACILITIES		
	Main Turnout	Unit	1.00
	Supplementary Turn out	Unit	1.00

PACKAGE 2: Construction of Main Canal and Canal Structures at Sta 1+420 to 5+140

	WORK ITEMS	Unit	Quantity
	I. CANALIZATION		
200	Clearing & Grubbing	Sq.m.	8,880.00
400	Common Excavation	Cu.m	13,373.40
	II. CANAL STRUCTURES:		
1700	3000 Psi Reinf Concrete	Cu.m	856.79
	3000 Psi Reinf Concrete (El. Flume)	Cu.m.	39.60
600	Structure Excavation	Cu.m.	6,066.05
1200	Structure Backfill	Cu.m.	2,654.22
2000	RSB		
	Furnishing of RSB	Kgs.	41,739.55
	Cut Bend & Place of RSB	Kgs.	41,739.55
2400	PHI of 30" dia RCP	Pcs.	108.00
2400	PHI of 36" dia RCP	Pcs.	75.00
	III TERMINAL FACILITIES		
	MTO	Unit	3
	STO	Unit	15

PACKAGE 3: Construction of Canals and Structures Sta 5+140 to 9+777.24 and Lat A Sta.) 0+000 to 4+892.60

	WORK ITEMS	Unit	Quantity
	I. CANALIZATION:		
200	Clearing & Grubbing	Sq.m.	9,765.20
	II. CANAL STRUCTURES:		
1700	3000 PSI reinf. Concrete	Cu.m.	1,175.38
600	Structure Excavation	Cu.m.	5,604.73
1200	Structure Backfill	Cu.m.	3,130.31
2000	RSB		
	Furnishing of RSB	Kgs.	52,692.10
	Cut. Bend & Place of RSB	Kgs.	52,692.10
2400	PHI of 18" dia RCP	Pcs	8.00
2400	PHI of 24" dia RCP	Pcs.	32.00
	III. TERMINAL FACILITIES		
	MTO	unit	5.00
	STO	unit	30.00

Minimum Equipment Required

Package 1

Bulldozer, 100 hp (1 unit) - owned or leased, Hydraulic Excavator, 0.75 cu.m. (2 units) – owned or leased, Dump Trucks 4-6 cu.m. (4 units) - owned or leased, Stake Trucks 4-6 cu.m. (2 units) - owned or leased, Vibratory Plate Compactor (6 units) - owned or leased, 1-Bagger Concrete Mixer (6 units) - owned or leased, Wheel Loader (1 unit) owned or leased, Concrete Vibrator (6 units) – owned or leased, 4" ø dewatering pumps (6 units) – owned or leased, Bar Cutter (6 units) owned or leased

Package 2

Bulldozer, 100 hp (1 unit) – owned or leased, Hydraulic Excavator, .75 cu.m. (2 units) – owned or leased, Dump Trucks 4-6 cu.m. (3 units)-owned or leased, Stake Trucks 4-6 cu.m. (2 units) – owned or leased, Vibratory Plate Compactor (6 units) – owned or leased, 1-Bagger Concrete Mixer (6 units) – owned or leased, Wheel Loader (1 unit) owned or leased, Concrete Vibrator (6 units) – owned or leased, 4" ø dewatering pumps (6 units) – owned or leased, Bar Cutter (6 units) owned or leased.

Package 3

Bulldozer, 120 hp (1 unit)-owned or leased, Hydraulic Excavator, .35 cu.m. (2 units) – owned or leased, Dump Trucks 4-6 cu.m. (3 unit) owned or leased, Stake Trucks 4-6 cu.m. (2 units) owned or leased, Vibratory Plate Compactor (6 units) – owned or leased, 1-Bagger Concrete Mixer (6 units) – owned or leased, Wheel Loader (1 unit)-owned or leased Concrete Vibrator (6 units) – owned or leased, 4" ø dewatering pumps (6 units) – owned or leased, Bar Cutter (6 units) owned or leased.

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of Republic Act No. 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the Government Procurement Reform Act subject to exceptions stated in the Bidding Documents, only Bids from Bidders who passed an eligibility check will be opened. The bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post qualification stage in order to finally determine its responsiveness to the technical and financial requirement of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated Responsive Bid (LCRB) who was determined as such during post qualification. The estimated project costs are P11,088,490.00 (Package 1), P11,540,680.00 (Package 2) P12,225,486.00 (Package 3)

The documents required in the Eligibility Document shall be submitted as part of the Technical Documents of the Bidders as provided in the Instruction to Bidders.

Interested eligible Bidders may obtain further information from the NIA Regional Irrigation Office 10 - BAC, Cagayan de Oro City and inspect bidding documents at the address given below from 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 PM on June 8, 2007 to 2:00 PM, July 9, 2007.

A complete set of Bidding Document in English may be purchased by interested Bidders from the address below and upon payment of non-refundable amount of PHP10,000.00. The Bidding Document shall be personally received by the Bidder or his duly authorized representative on or before 2:00 P.M. July 9, 2007

The NIA 10 Regional BAC will hold a Pre-Bidding Conference opened to all eligible Bidders on June 26, 2007 at 2:00 P.M. at the City Hall of Ozamiz City, Misamis Occidental

Eligible Bidders must submit their bids at the address below on or before 2:00 P.M., July 9, 2007. All bids must be accompanied by a Bid Security in the form of CASH, MANAGER'S CHECK, CASHIER'S CHECK AND BANK GUARANTEE of PHP166,328.00 (Package 1), PHP173,111.00 (Package 2) & PHP183,383.00 (Package 3) or an equivalent amount in a freely convertible currency. Late bids shall not be accepted. Bid opening shall be on 2:00 P.M., July 9, 2007 at the NIA Regional Office 10, Carmen, Cagayan de Oro City. Bids shall be opened in the presence of the Bidder's representatives who choose to attend at the above address

Other documents include valid PCAB license, valid and current Mayor's Permit, BIR Tax Clearance and DOLE Certification

Completion of the Works is 150 Calendar Days for each package from the official start of the subproject.

NIA BAC Region X, reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

(Sgd.) ENGR. BERNARDO S. MERCADO
Chairman NIA RIO - 10 BAC ARCDP II
Tel no. 088 856 3256 08822726560

(PDI - June 8 2007)

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT
National Capital Region
DY Int'l Bldg., 1650 San Marcelino
cor. General Malvar St., Malate, Manila

NOTICE OF FILING OF APPLICATION/S FOR ALIEN EMPLOYMENT PERMIT/S (AEP/S)

Notice is hereby given that the following companies/employers have filed with this Regional Office application/s for Alien Employment Permit/s:

Name and address of Company/Employer	Name of Foreign National	Position
WORLDCASH, INC. 26/F Yuchengco Tower I, RCBC Plaza, Ayala Ave., Makati City	Saori Sakata	Japanese Customer Support
HARTE-HANKS PHILIPPINES, INC. 4/F Market Market Mall, Fort Bonifacio Global City, Taguig City	Tuan Cong Tran	Technical Agent
DREAMPHIL SERVICES INCORPORATED 21K Pearl of the Orient Bldg., 1240 Roxas Blvd., Ermita, Manila	Eunjung Jang	General Accounts Manager
PHILIPPINE MINING GROUP AND HOLDINGS, INC. Unit 1701, Tycoon Center, Pearl Drive, Ortigas Center, Pasig City	Xiaojun Jiang	Chairman of the Board
MANILA SEOUL WEEKLY INTERNATIONAL INCORPORATED 1501 Centerpoint Bldg., Meralco Ave., Pasig City	Joon Nam Lee	Reporter
FRESH N' FAMOUS FOODS INC. Jolibee Plaza, Emerald Ave., Pasig City	Sanjeev Sikka	Business Development Consultant
VELFOX MANUFACTURING CORP. 1269 Amang Rodriguez Ave., Brgy. dela Paz, Pasig City	Yardly Mejica Abellera	Electrical Maintenance Supervisor
KOMATSU ASIA & PACIFIC PTE. LTD. Unit W-3301B, West Tower, Philippine Stock Exchange Center, Pasig City	Nurhaji Suprapto Wijono	Technical Advisor
INTELLIRISK PHILIPPINES, INC. 17/F Tower 2, RCBC Plaza, 6819 Ayala Ave., Makati City	Deanna Darlene Deem	Vice President, Operations

If you have any information/objection to the abovementioned application/s please communicate with the Regional Director.

In commemoration of the 109th Anniversary of the Proclamation of the Philippine Independence, DOLE will hold a "Mega Job and Livelihood Fair" on June 12, 2007 at Rizal Park, Roxas Boulevard, Manila. For more information, call 3030364 / 3035922

LOURDES M. TRASMONTE
Regional Director

(PDI–June 8, 2007)

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Region X
DIVISION OF MISAMIS OCCIDENTAL
Osilao St., Poblacion I, Oroquieta City
E-mail add: misamisoccidental@deped.gov.ph
Fax No.: (088) 531-1145 • Tel. No.: (088) 531-1872 / 531-0067

Re-INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The **Department of Education, Division of Misamis Occidental**, through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites suppliers/manufacturers, distributors/contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the hereunder project:

NAME OF PROJECT	:	**Supply and Delivery of Elementary Tables and Chairs, Elementary & Secondary Armchairs, and Teachers Tables and Chairs**
LOCATION	:	**Deped-Division of Misamis Occidental, Region X**
ABC & FUNDING SOURCE	:	**Php 12,993,000.00**
FUNDING SOURCE	:	**GOP, CY 2006 GA**
CONTRACT DURATION	:	**120 days from the date of acceptance of Notice to Proceed**
DELIVERY SITES	:	**"Door-to-door" delivery to various recipient schools**

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations of R.A. 9184 known as the Government Procurement Reform Act, and is restricted to organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interests or outstanding capital stocks belonging to citizens of the Philippines, as specified in Republic Act 5183. Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in Section II, Instruction to Bidders of the Bidding Documents.

The schedule of BAC activities are as follows:

Activity	Date	Venue
1. Issuance of Bid Documents	June 13-June 25, 2007	BAC Secretariat office
2. Pre-bid Conference	June 26, 2007	MOPUSTA conference room
3. Deadline of Submission and Opening of Bids	July 12, 2007 @ 9:00 a.m.	MOPUSTA conference room

A complete set of Eligibility Requirements and Bid Documents will be available only to prospective bidders from the BAC Secretariat office c/o Planning Office upon payment of a non-refundable amount of **Php,19,489.50** to the DepED Misamis Occidental Division Cashier. The complete sealed envelopes will be brought during the opening of bids or be dropped in the bidding box placed in the Division Office lobby on or before July 12, 2007 at exactly 10:00 in the morning. LATE bids will not be accepted.

The **DepED Misamis Occidental Division**, reserves the right to accept or reject any bid, or all bids and to annul the bidding process and reject all bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders and award the contract to any bidder whose proposal as determined by the BAC is the most advantageous to the government.

Approved by:

(Sgd.) REBONFAMIL R. BAGUIO
OIC, Asst. Schools Division Superintendent
BAC Chairperson

(PDI–June 8 & 11, 2007)

RP plans to become 'mining country' by 2010

Mining seen accounting for 8.6% of RP exports

By Amy R. Remo

THE PHILIPPINES can become a "mining country" by 2010 if production of minerals keeps growing at its current pace, Environment and Natural Resources Secretary Angelo T. Reyes said yesterday.

"With the continuing increase in production value, we are optimistic on achieving a projected 8.6 percent mining exports share to total exports by 2010,'" Reyes said.

Based on a 2002 World Bank study, a country can be called a "mining country" if it has a large domestic sector and its mining industry contributes at least 6 percent to total exports.

The Mines and Geosciences Bureau had initially projected that the mining sector's contribution to exports would hit only 2.8 percent next year and 2.9 percent in 2009.

But because of the influx of investments into the mining sector, the contribution of the mining sector to exports already went up to 4.5 percent last year.

At this pace, the sector was confident that the contribution would go up to 8.6 percent by 2010 when all the priority mining projects start production.

The projections were based on production and exports data of current producing mines and the schedules set by the 24 priority minerals development projects.

"The growth in mining exports had already begun last year as total exports of mineral and mineral products reached about $2.06 billion, more than double 2005's $820 million," said MGB Director Horacio C. Ramos.

Ramos added that the exports value of all commodities, except for chromium, skyrocketed last year because of the country's improved production.

Ramos also noted the increasing production from existing mines.

These include the Palawan HPP Project of Coral Bay Nickel Corp. and the Canatuan Gold Project of TVI Resources Development Phils. Berong Nickel Project of Atlas Consolidated Mining and Development Corp. and London-listed Toledo Mining Corp., on the other hand, just started commercial production.

The Adlay-Cagdianao-Tandawa Project of Surigao Integrated Resources Corp. is scheduled to start producing late this year for test shipment, while the Didipio Copper Project of OceanaGold and the Masbate Gold Project of Filminera Resources Inc. plan to produce by the second quarter of 2008.

The Carmen Copper Project of Atlas Consolidated Mining Corp. is coming on stream by the fourth quarter of next year.

In his presentation, Ramos also stressed the achievements of the revitalization program, particularly in terms of attracting some of the world's biggest mining players to invest in the country.

"Two and half years into the government's revitalization program, we believe that we have made substantial inroads," Ramos said.

"A total of $694 million in investments have been placed in the local mining industry during the past two and a half years of the program. This is projected to rise in the coming years with significant inflow anticipated in 2008 to 2010," he added.

Since the start of the revitalization program, around 6,500 new jobs have been generated with an additional 3,000 jobs projected for 2007.

Another 30,000 jobs are expected to be added between 2008 and 2010.

Taxes, fees and royalties from mining totaled P3.1 billion, slightly higher than 2005's P2.9 billion, but more than double 2002's P1.4 billion.

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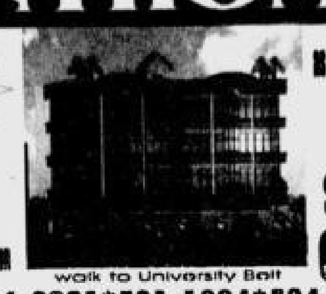
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Forex reserves ... From page B1

make transactions, such as importation, with the rest of the world. It also reflects the country's ability to protect its local currency from the depreciating effects of speculation and a volatile foreign exchange market.

The BSP said the latest GIR figure was enough to accommodate 4.8 months worth of imported goods and payments of services.

The GIR was also equivalent to 5.1 times the country's short-term debt based on original maturity, and 2.7 times based on residual maturity.

Short-term debt based on residual maturity refers to outstanding external debt with original maturity of one year or less, plus principal payments on medium- and long-term loans of the public and private sectors falling due within the next 12 months.

The country still managed to post record-high GIR in the first five months of the year even after the national government prepaid foreign-currency denominated debts in April, the BSP said.

The central bank prepaid $130 million worth of debts, which was supposed to fall due only in October. The national government also prepaid $126 million worth of Brady bonds that was scheduled to mature in June 2018.

Of the $25.8-billion GIR in the five-month period, foreign investments accounted for the biggest chunk with $21.99 billion.

This marked a 2.6-percent increase from the $21.429 billion worth of foreign investments recorded in April, and a 25.6-percent rise from the $17.503 billion in May last year.

The remainder of the GIR were composed of gold and special drawing rights.

The government attributed growth in foreign investments to improving macroeconomic fundamentals, including the drop in the budget deficit, the slowdown in inflation and the rise in gross domestic product growth.

The government's deficit was trimmed to P64.8 billion last year from P146.8 billion the previous year, aided partly by the rise in revenue collection and by tight government spending.

The economy, as measured by the country's gross domestic product, grew 6.9 percent in the first quarter, marking its strongest performance in 17 years.

Shares close 1.17% ... From page B1

Some bargain-hunting midway through the session helped trim the losses, with the rebound in China's stock markets also helping calm investor nerves, they said.

The composite index was down 41.68 points at 3,528.79 having traded between 3,503.97 and 3,570.47. The broader all-share index fell 23.08 points to 2,252.97.

Declines led gains 65 to 51, with 44 stocks unchanged.

Volume was 7.47 billion shares worth P5.68 billion ($123.1 million). AFP

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Ballroom, The Renaissance Makati City Hotel

Highlights

The Philippine Bond Market In the Perspective of the Asian Region
Mr. Miyachi Masato
Head
Asian Bond Market Initiative
Asian Development Bank

The Opportunities in The Local Corporate Bond Market
Mr. Francisco C. Sebastian
President
First Metro Investment Corporation

The Challenges In The Philippine Corporate Bond Market
Mr. Victor A. Abola, Ph.D.
Economist
University of Asia and the Pacific

Panel of Discussants

Atty. Jose P. Aquino
Director
Securities and Exchange Commision

Atty. James H. Roldan
Assistant Commisioner
Bureau of Internal Revenue

Mr. Edwin B. Villanueva
Director
Philippine Rating Services Corporation

Moderator
Mr. Roberto Juanchito T. Dispo
Executive Vice President
First Metro Investment Corporaion

Amazing women

LAST MAY 16, HISTORY WAS MADE AS THREE Pinays became the first Southeast Asian women to summit Mount Everest and the first women in the world to traverse the mountain from the North side to the South side. Filipinas Noelle Wenceslao, Carina Dayondon, and Janet Belarmino certainly made our country proud as they overcame numerous obstacles to reach the top of the highest mountain on earth.

During their expedition, the three Pinays had to bear with the unforgiving cold climate of the Himalaya range, tough trails, and climbing during nighttime. Apart from the physical challenges though, a big challenge for the girls during their three-month-climb was being away from their loved ones.

The means of communication made available to the girls while they were at Everest was the Smart Link satellite phone, a satellite-based service that provides incoming and outgoing voice services in areas without landline and cellular access. Smart Link was used to maintain close coordination between the girls and their different base camps, considering the team's complicated logistics that required them to update base camps from both the Nepal and Tibet side. Aside from using Smart Link to maintain close coordination with their different base camps, the girls were glad to be able to keep in touch with their family and friends all throughout the expedition.

"Our Smart Link satellite phone was a vital communication tool for us," says Noelle, who was the first member of the team to reach the summit. "There were several times during the expedition when we were unable to update our correspondents on the Tibet and Nepal Base Camps because our radios could not get a signal, but Smart Link pulled us through," she explained.

Noelle, whose inspiration during her climb was her mother who passed away last July due to a stroke, was accompanied by her father during the expedition. "He climbed with us and stayed at the Nepal Base Camp," Noelle says. "I used the satellite phone to call my sister in Manila. It was actually quite overwhelming for me to be able to talk to her all the way from Everest."

"I'm not too familiar with all these new gadgets and advancements in technology, so it was cool to be able to use the satellite phone during our trek," Noelle adds.

"We started using our Smart Link satellite phone early on in the expedition, during the acclimatization," says Carina, referring to procedure where they had to adjust to the climate change in the Himalayas. Carina used Smart Link to call her family based in Bukidnon: her parents - who at first were worried when they discovered their daughter's plans of climbing Everest, and her 13 siblings.

"Having Smart Link made me feel close to home - In just a few seconds, I was able to talk to my family," shares Carina.

Janet had just given birth to her firstborn son Himalaya when she left to fulfill her dream to summit Mount Everest. "He was only two months old then; it was really tough for me to leave," she admits.

During the expedition, Janet would call her husband Ricky Serdenia using Smart Link to check on him and the baby. "I remember how I'd ask my husband to give the phone to Himalaya. It was so touching for me every time I'd hear him babbling his own baby language over the phone. Those times played a big role in encouraging me climb," Janet narrates.

Janet's husband Ricky and her mother Emelinda recalls how relieved they would be every time Janet would call from Everest using Smart Link. "I constanly worried about how she's doing... pag tumatawag siya lagi kong sinasabi sa kanya, 'kung sobrang nahihirapan ka na, magsabi ka lang sa mga kasama mo'," Ricky says. "But she's a tough woman; up to now I still can't believe she was able to reach the summit! I'm so proud of her," he exclaims.

Janet's mother Emelinda shares her son-in-law's sentiments. "Any mother would be worried if her daughter was in some far-away place; how much more that my daughter was actually climbing the world's highest mountain? Which was why it was comforting for us to hear from them while they were at Everest, using the satellite phones," she shares.

"I never dreamt that my daughter would climb Mount Everest. We come from the province and we do have mountains there, but they're not at all like Everest," Emelinda says, sharing how it was inevitable for her to worry about her daughter after hearing so many unfortunate stories about people who were unable to reach the summit. "Every call I received from her while she was at the expedition would assure me of how determined and focused my daughter is," she shared.

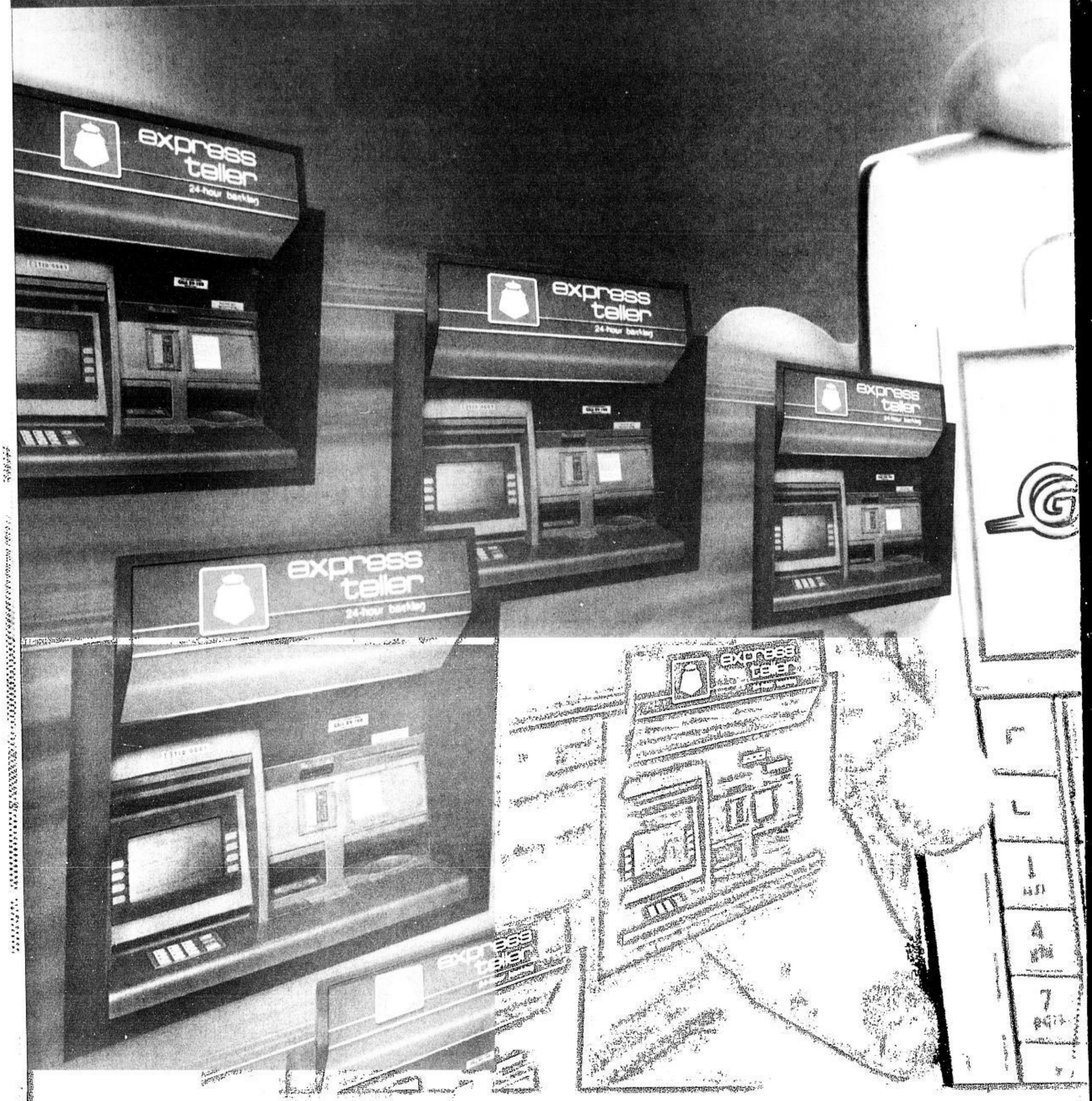
The girls, however, constantly points out how their victory at Everest should not be attributed to them being strong women. "We succeeded not because we're strong individuals, but because we worked as a team," Janet says. "We helped and encouraged each other." Aside from this, the three summiteers emphasized that the support of the whole Philippines sought them through, and most importantly, the encouragement of their loved ones back home while they pursued their dream of conquering Mount Everest. "Which is why we believe Smart Link was an important instrument in our expedition, because it allowed us to stay connected to people back home."

"We were sure of our loved ones' full support for us way before we left for Everest, but to actually hear their voice while we were at the expedition and hear their words of encouragement... iba parin yon," Carina expounds.

PHOTO BY BANNY HERMANOS

FIRST Southeast Asian women on top of the world. From left: Carina Dayondon, Noelle Wenceslao, Janet Belarmino.

"Sana pwede magka



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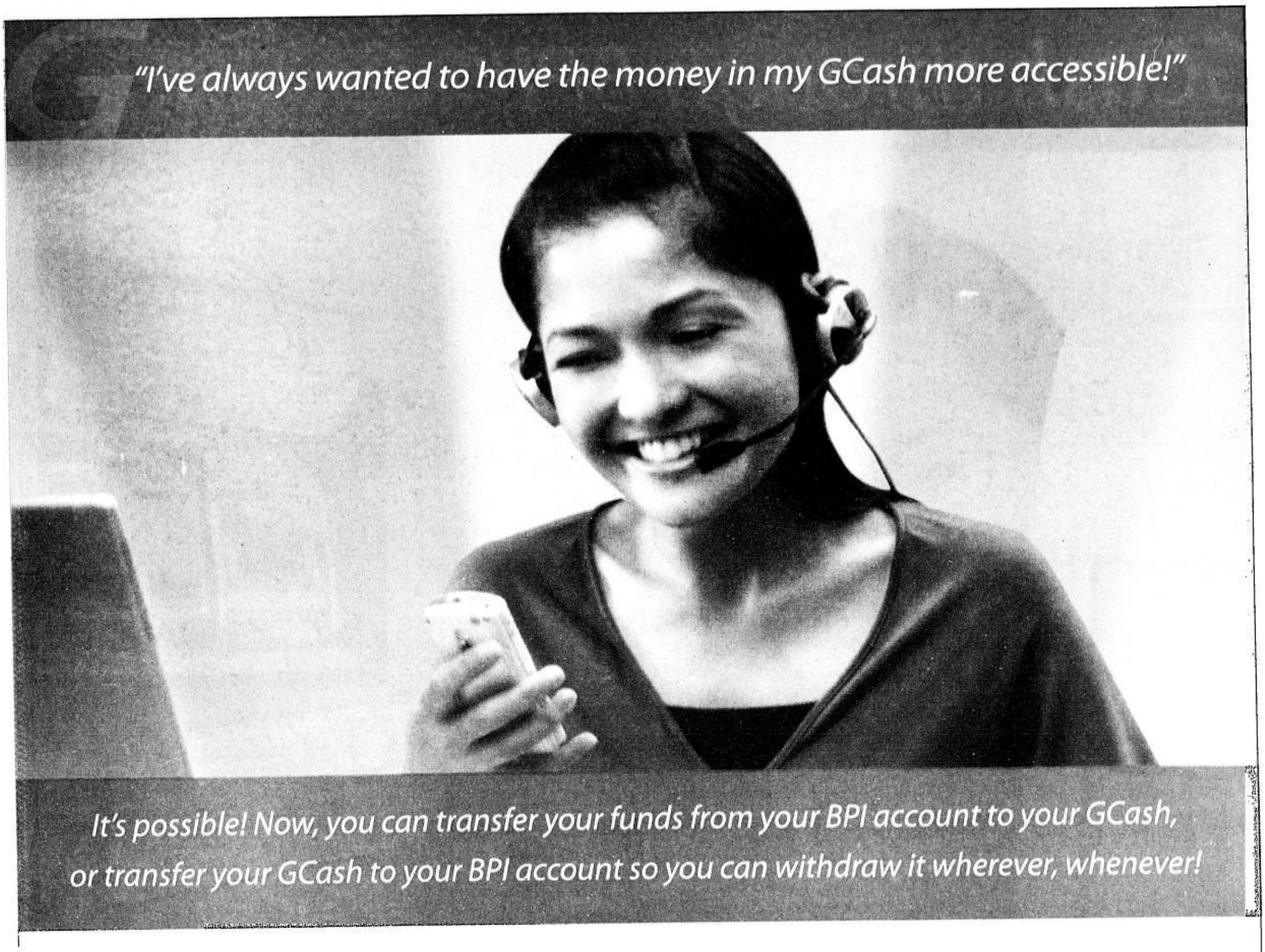

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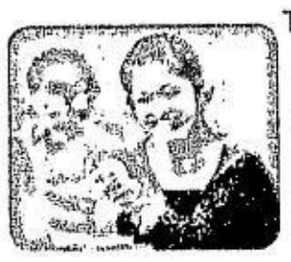

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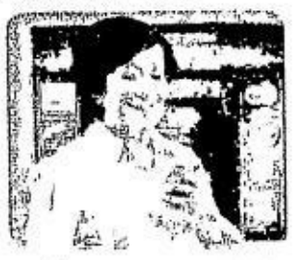

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PSALM expects high bids for Masinloc

Inclusion of power supply deal makes asset more attractive

By Abigail L. Ho

POWER SECTOR ASSETS AND LIABILITIES Management Corp. expects to fetch high bids for the 600-megawatt (MW) Masinloc coal-fired power facility in Zambales, with 265 MW of the plant's capacity now covered by power supply contracts.

In an interview with reporters yesterday, PSALM president and chief executive Jose Ibazeta said the reserve or floor price for the plant would most likely go up since 41 percent of its dependable capacity now have a sure market.

He declined to reveal the reserve price for the plant, however, so as not to affect the bids that would be submitted in the July 26 auction.

Right now, he said there were still 20 entities interested in bidding for the Masinloc plant.

By July 26, he said PSALM hoped to get between eight and 12 bids, as some of the 20 interested parties would likely band together to form consortia that could submit stronger offers.

With 265 MW of supply contracts in place, he said it was highly probable that the Masinloc plant would fetch as much as it did, or even higher, when it was first sold to YNN Pacific Consortium Inc. for $561.7 million three years ago.

Earlier attempts to privatize Masinloc and the 600-MW Calaca coal-fired power plant—both considered big-ticket items—failed because of the lack of power supply contracts assigned to them.

These contracts will assure winning bidders of a ready market for the power that the plants will generate.

Although the Masinloc plant was won by YNN earlier, the sale did not materialize as the group failed to cough up the required 40-percent upfront payment for the plant. This resulted in the termination of the consortium's asset purchase agreement with PSALM.

YNN even got another entity, Malaysia's Ranhill Berhad, to help it raise the money for the down payment. But the cash was not released due to the absence of a supply contract attached to the plant.

With the supply contract problem now resolved, Ibazeta expressed confidence that the sale of the Masinloc plant would finally be completed this time around.

Norwegian firm to put up training center in Subic

By Riza T. Olchondra

NORWAY'S ODFJELL ASA, A LEADING global shipper of chemicals and other specialty bulk liquids, will soon put up a maritime training center at the Subic Freeport, Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority (SBMA) Chair Feliciano G. Salonga said in a statement.

Salonga said Odfjell would spend $15,000 to put up the training center in Subic.

The firm owns and operates a fleet of 123 ships and new buildings with capacity of 3.4 million dead weight tons (DWT). It has wholly owned tank terminals in Rotterdam and Houston, as well as partially owned terminals in Singapore, Korea and China. Its crew will be trained at the Subic facility.

"This project is timely as we promote the competitiveness and productivity of the maritime industry in Subic Bay which is becoming a place for maritime and naval exercises for foreign and domestic seafarers," Salonga said.

Other maritime-related training schools in Subic are the International Development and Environmental Shipping School, Maritime Center Subic, and the Hanjin Skills Development Center for shipbuilding workers of the Hanjin Heavy Industries Corp.

Indonesia assures RP clients steady coal supply

DESPITE AN INFLUX OF ORDERS FROM coal buyers in China and India, the Indonesian government has vowed to fulfill its existing contracts with Philippine customers, even committing to open new coal areas from where the Philippines can source its coal requirements.

Energy Secretary Raphael Lotilla said Indonesian Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources Purnomo Yusgiantoro himself had given this commitment, considering the Philippines' record of being a reliable and stable customer of Indonesian coal firms.

"I earlier brought up our concerns that (Indonesian coal suppliers) might renege on their contracts with Philippine customers because they were being offered long-term contracts at higher prices by buyers from China and India," he related.

"But Purnomo gave the assurance that notwithstanding the entry of Chinese and Indian coal buyers, Indonesian coal firms will not renege on existing contracts with Philippine customers. In fact, they'll be making available new coal sources in Kalimantan for Philippine customers," he said.

He added that the Indonesian government had also expressed interest in amending a memorandum of understanding on coal that the governments of the two countries signed three years ago.

In an earlier interview, Energy Undersecretary Guillermo Balce said the government, through the Department of Energy, would pursue a government-to-government long-term coal supply deal with Indonesia to meet the coal requirements of National Power Corp. and other local entities.

If a government-to-government agreement could not be achieved, he said another option would be for the DOE to strike deals with Indonesian national coal company PT Bukit Asam.

The Indonesian government-owned coal firm could also enter into supply agreements with private coal companies in Indonesia, if it did not have excess supply to sell to the Philippines, he said.

The coal supply that it would secure via those contracts could be pooled and sold to the Philippines, he added.

The country relies on China, Indonesia and Australia for its coal requirements as local mines cannot produce enough to meet domestic demand. *Abigail L. Ho*

THIRD double-hull, double-bottom vessel commisioned by the oil firm

Petron steps up product transport safety program

PETRON CORP. RECENTLY commissioned the third of the nine double-hull, double-bottom vessels that it intended to tap between 2005 and 2008 under its Shipping Alliance Project.

The vessel, M/T Petro Anica, was launched recently and is now on its maiden voyage. It is owned by Seatrans Corp., a subsidiary of the Petrolift Group of Companies, with whom Petron has a long-term contract.

Petron's Shipping Alliance Project, according to company vice president for supply and operations Felimon Antiporda, is a program to enhance safety in the transport of oil products to Petron's storage facilities throughout the country. It involves the commissioning of nine double-hull, double-bottom vessels by 2006, which is in line with the Maritime Industry Authority's plan to allow only these types of oil tankers to ply domestic routes.

"We will even be ahead of the International Maritime Organization's (IMO) 2010 deadline for international tankers carrying persistent oil to comply with the double-hull, double-bottom requirement," Antiporta said in a presentation during a recent meeting of the National Disaster Coordinating Council.

He said Petron had so far awarded contracts for these types of vessels to four shipping companies under the project. The first vessel was inaugurated in April 2005, followed by the second in August 2006. The third vessel, M/T Petro Anica, is a next-generation oil tanker equipped with advanced fire-fighting and life-saving systems.

"It exceeds Marina requirements for local vessels," Antiporta said.

CebuPac passenger traffic up 89%

By Riza T. Olchondra

BUDGET AIRLINE Cebu Pacific said its passenger traffic grew by 89 percent during a 12-month period that ended May 31, 2007.

In a statement, Cebu Pacific, which is owned by the Gokongwei family, said its passenger carriage rose from 2.38 million June 2005 to May 2006 to 4.5 million for June 2006 to May 2007.

Domestic traffic grew 68 percent from 2.27 million to 3.83 million this year.

International operations expanded 534 percent from 106,262 to 674,047 passengers.

"We are very happy to see that we've been giving more people the opportunity to travel by air with our very low fares and our continued domestic and international expansion," said Candice Iyog, Cebu Pacific vice president for marketing and product.

Cebu Pacific's domestic seat capacity grew 50 percent during the 12-month period from year-ago level.

It carried about 520,000 passengers in May 2007, the highest the airline has ever carried since it started operation in 1996.

Iyog added that with the arrival of another Airbus aircraft late this year, the airline will be able to add more capacity into its network and offer more seats at lower fares. Cebu Pacific said it is expecting to carry more than 5 million passengers this year and 10 million by 2013.

Phoenix expands retail network

By Elizabeth S. Lacson

DAVAO-BASED PHOENIX PETROLEUM Philippines Inc. plans to expand its retail service stations to 140 by 2010 as it aims to become a major oil player.

Company president Dennis Uy said that for this year alone, Phoenix intended to increase its retail stations by another 25 to 30.

Each retail station costs $3 million. The expansion will be funded by Phoenix and potential franchise holders.

Phoenix is engaged in the trading of refined petroleum products and the operation of oil depots and storage facilities south of the Philippines. Its products and services are distributed under the "Phoenix Fuels Life" brand.

Phoenix opened its first gas station in June 2005 in Davao del Sur. It now has more than 20 retail service stations. By end-2007, 30 more will be added.

Petroterminals Philippines Corp., a subsidiary of Phoenix, said a 3.5-hectare property in the Batangas Union Industrial Park would house a depot and distribution terminal for Phoenix's petroleum products.

NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY
Regional Office 6 - Iloilo City

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

Repair of Perimeter Fence

The NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY, Regional Office 6, through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) invites contractors registered and classified by the Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB) to apply for eligibility and if found eligible, to bid for the hereunder contract:

Name of Contract	Repair of Perimeter Fence
Location	NFA, Jaro, Iloilo City
Brief Description	Repair of Perimeter Fence and Land Development
Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC)	Two Million Three Hundred Fifty Four Thousand Six Hundred Twenty Eight Pesos & 63/100 (P2,354,628.63)
Contract Duration	Nine (90) calendar days

Prospective Bidders should possess a valid PCAB license and have completed a similar contract with a value of at least 50% of the ABC of the project to be bid. Or in lieu of the single largest contract, potential bidders should have at least three (3) completed similar contracts in the aggregate amount of at least 50% of the ABC to be bid; provided that the largest of these similar contracts must be at least 25% of the ABC, and the bidder has been in existence for at least 3 years prior to posting of this IAEB. Further, prospective bidder should have key personnel and equipment (listed in the Eligibility Forms) available for the prosecution of the contract. The BAC will use non-discretionary pass/fail criteria in the Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids. The BAC will conduct post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference, Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).

The schedule of BAC activities is as follows:

BAC ACTIVITIES	DATE	TIME
1. Receipt from prospective bidders of Letters of Intent (LOI) including Application for Eligibility	June 11-15, 2007	8AM - 5PM
2. Issuance of Eligibility Forms	June 11-15, 2007	8AM - 5PM
3. Receipt of Eligibility Requirements	June 21, 2007	
4. Notice of Results of Eligibility Check	June 26, 2007	
5. Issuance of Bid Documents	June 26-29, 2007	
6. Pre-Bid Conference	July 3, 2007	2PM
7. Receipt and Opening of Bids	July 17, 2007	2PM

The BAC will issue to prospective bidders Eligibility Forms at National Food Authority, Iloilo Regional Office, 2/F, Jaro, Iloilo City, upon their submission of a LOI, and upon their payment of a non-refundable amount of Two Thousand Pesos (P2,000.00) to the NFA Cashier. Prospective bidders shall submit the Eligibility Requirements to the BAC at the said address. They may also obtain the results of the Eligibility Check by the BAC at the same address.

The BAC will issue Bidding Documents only to bidders declared by the BAC to be eligible for bidding upon payment of a non-refundable amount of THREE THOUSAND PESOS (P3,000.00) to the NFA Cashier.

The NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY, Regional Office 6 assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of their bids.

Approved by:

(Sgd.) VILMA H. ZARRAGA
BAC Chairperson

(PDI - June 8, 2007)

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas
Maynila, Pilipinas
BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites suppliers/manufacturers/distributors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the hereunder project:

Item No.	Name of Project/ Brief Description	Approved Budget for the Contract
1	One (1) lot – supply, install and make operational six (6) units Passenger/Service/Freight elevators at the 5-Storey and Multi-Storey Buildings as per BSP scope of works and specifications	Equipment Cost – US$ 263,800.00 Dismantling/Installation Cost – P 5,322,000.00
2	One (1) lot – supply, install and make operational four (4) units Passenger/Service/Freight elevators at the Delegation and Secretariat Buildings, Philippine International Convention Center Complex, Roxas Blvd., Pasay City per BSP scope of works and specifications	Equipment Cost – US$ 322,623.00 Dismantling/Installation Costs – P 2,993,852.00
3	One (1) lot – Supply, install and make operational two (2) units Passenger elevators at BSP La Union Regional Office per BSP scope of works and specifications	Equipment Cost – US$ 46,900.00 Dismantling/Installation Costs – P 1,609,100.00
4	One (1) lot – Supply, install and make operational one (1) unit elevator for the Convention Hall Building BSRO Davao per BSP scope of works and specifications	Equipment Cost – US$ 38,500.00 Dismantling/Installation Cost – P 720,000.00
5	One (1) lot – supply, install and make operational six (6) units Escalators at the Delegation Building, Philippine International Convention Center Complex, Roxas Blvd., Pasay City per BSP scope of works and specifications	Equipment Cost – US$ 235,960.00 Dismantling/Installation Cost – P 1,593,822.00
	Completion Period	Per BSP Terms of Reference

Prospective bidders should have undertaken at least three (3) completed similar contracts within the last five (5) years (2002 to present), with an aggregate amount of at least 50% of the ABC of the lot to be bid, one of which costs at least 25% of the ABC. Prospective bidders for several lots, should have undertaken at least three (3) completed similar contracts within the last five (5) years (2002 to present) with an aggregate amount of at least 50% of the lot with the highest ABC, one of which costs at least 25% of the said ABC. The Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference(s), Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).

The complete schedule of activities is listed, as follows:

Activities	Schedule
1. Issuance of Bid Documents	Starting 08 June 2007
2. Pre-Bid Conference	29 June 2007; 9:30 A.M.
3. Opening of Bids	17 July 2007; 2:00 P.M.
4. Bid Evaluation	These shall be in accordance with the prescribed periods allowed in the Implementing Rules & Regulations (IRR)-A of R.A. No. 9184 dated 10 January 2003
5. Post-qualification	
6. Notice of Award	

Bid Documents will be available only to prospective bidders upon payment of a non-refundable amount of **Item 1 P9,800.00; Item 2 P10,000.00; Item 3 P2,100.00; Item 4 P1,600.00; and Item 5 P7,000.00** to the BSP Cashier.

The BSP assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of the bid.

The BSP reserves the right to reject any and all bid proposals, or declare the bidding a failure, or not award the contract, and makes no assurance that a contract shall be entered into as a result of this invitation.

(Sgd.) JUAN DE ZUÑIGA, JR.
Chairman

(PDI – June 8, 2007)

Philippine Economic Zone Authority
Roxas Boulevard corner San Luis Street, Pasay City, Metro Manila, Philippines
Telephones (632) 5513438 • 5513454 • Facsimile (632) 5513436
E-mail: info@peza.gov.ph • Website: www.peza.gov.ph

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID
Security Services Requirement of PEZA
(PEZA-HO-2007-04)

1. The PHILIPPINE ECONOMIC ZONE AUTHORITY (PEZA), through its Corporate Operating Budget for the CY 2007 intends to apply the sum of P 35,550,660.00 being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for the Security Services Requirement of PEZA. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid opening.
2. The PEZA now invites Bids from eligible Bidders to provide the following number of Security Guards:

National Capital Region	37
Region III	17
Region IV – Growth Corridor Area	23
Region IV – Growth Corridor Area I	86
Region IV – Extended Metro Area	31

Delivery of the GOODS is required for one (1) year. The description of an eligible Bidder is contained in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB.

3. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act", and is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines and to citizens or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens pursuant to Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183) and subject to Commonwealth Act 138 (C.A. 138). Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB. The bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine responsiveness of the bid to technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.
4. Prospective bidders must have a minimum of five (5) years experience in providing security services and should have experience in undertaking a single similar project within the last five (5) years with an amount of at least 50% of the ABC.
5. Bidders should not have existing security services contract with any of PEZA's locators to avoid conflict of interest.
6. In addition, bidders must have filed their **latest annual income and business tax returns** (VAT and/or Percentage Taxes covering six (6) months immediately prior to the submission of bids) via the Electronic Filing and Payment System (eFPS) of the Bureau of Internal Revenue
7. Interested bidders may obtain further information from the PEZA and inspect the Bidding documents at the address given below from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Mondays to Fridays.
8. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be inspected and purchased by interested Bidders from 08 to 15 June 2007, Mondays to Fridays, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at the address below and upon payment of a nonrefundable fee in the amount of Twenty Thousand Pesos Only (P20,000.00) and submission of a certified copy of their Phil-GEPS Registration Certificate. The method of payment will be cash basis only. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.
9. The PEZA will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all interested parties on 19 June 2007, 2:00 p.m. at the 6th Floor, Social Hall, PEZA Building, Roxas Boulevard corner San Luis St., Pasay City.
10. Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered to the address below on or before 11:00 a.m. of 05 July 2007. All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid security in the form of GSIS Surety Bond in the amount of not less than 2.5% of the ABC or in the form of cash, certified check, cashier's check, bank draft or irrevocable letter of credit in the amount of not less than *1% of the ABC*. Late Bids shall not be accepted.
11. Bid opening shall be on 05 July 2007, 2:00 p.m. at the 6th Floor Social Hall, PEZA Bldg., Roxas Blvd. corner San Luis St., Pasay City. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend.
12. In case any of the above dates is declared a special non-working holiday, it will automatically be reset on the next working day.
13. The PEZA reserves the right to accept any Bid, to annul the bidding process and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

Philippine Economic Zone Authority
Bids and Awards Committee Secretariat
3/F PEZA Building, Roxas Boulevard corner San Luis St., Pasay City
Tel. No. 891-6444 / Telefax No. 551-9587
e-mail: peza_bac_secretariat@yahoo.com
Website: www.peza.gov.ph

THE CHAIRMAN
Bids & Awards Committee

(PDI – June 8, 2007)

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- Necessary with experience
- Can speak and understand English

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email: ftl01@hrd-s.com

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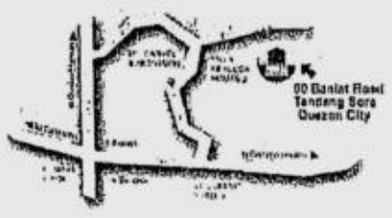

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INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Metro Iloilo Water District (MIWD), through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites qualified bidders to apply for eligibility and to bid for the following contracts:

Item No.	Qty.	Name of Contracts	Approved Budget for the Contract	Cost of Bid Documents (Non-Refundable)	Delivery Period/ Contract Duration
1	1 lot	Supply and Delivery of uPVC Pipes	P 9,310,000.00	P2,500.00	30 cds
2	1 lot	Supply and Delivery of Various Fittings	P 3,050,000.00	P1,500.00	30 cds
3	1 lot	Supply and Delivery of Mortar Lined Steel Pipe	P 900,000.00	P 750.00	30 cds

Prospective bidders should have the experience in undertaking a similar contract within the last two years with an amount of 50% of the proposed contract for bidding. The Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted accordingly.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bid Conference(s), Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations-A (IRR-A).

Bid Documents and additional information may be obtained at the BAC Secretariat, Second Floor of the MIWD Building, Bonifacio Drive, Iloilo City.

The schedule of procurement activities is as follows:

BAC ACTIVITIES	SCHEDULE
1. Advertisement	June 8-14, 2007
2. Issuance of Bid Documents	June 18-27, 2007
3. Pre-Bid Conference	June 28, 2007, 2:00 PM
4. Deadline of Submission of Bids	July 13, 2007, 9:00 AM
5. Opening of Bids	July 13, 2007, 9:00 AM

The MIWD BAC reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bids, to waive minor informality in the bids received, declare a failure of bidding for any justified and reasonable ground, and to award the contract to the bidder whose bid, as evaluated by the BAC, is most advantageous to the District.

Approved by:

(Sgd.) **MARY JEANNE M. VILLAGRACIA**
Chair, Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI – June 8, 2007)

PhilRice PHILIPPINE RICE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Philippine Rice Research Institute (PhilRice), through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites contractors registered with and classified by the Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB) to apply for eligibility and if found eligible, to bid for the hereunder:

Name of Contract : **Conversion of PhilRice-Los Baños Warehouse to Seed Processing and Storage Facility**
Location : **PhilRice-Los Baños, UPLB Campus, Los Baños, Laguna**
Brief Description : **345 Sq. Mtrs. total floor area**
Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) : **PhP 5,800,000.00**
Contract Duration : **120 Calendar Days**

Prospective bidders should possess a valid PCAB License applicable to the contract, have completed a similar contract with a value of at least 50% of the ABC, and have key personnel and equipment (listed in the Eligibility Forms) available in the execution of the contract. The BAC will use non-discretionary pass/fail criteria in the Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids. The BAC will conduct post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference, Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulation (IRR).

The schedule of BAC activities is as follows:

BAC Activities	Schedule
1. Receipt from prospective bidders of Letters of Intent (LOI) including Application for Eligibility	18 June 2007
2. Issuance of Eligibility Forms	18 June 2007
3. Receipt of Eligibility Requirements	21 June 2007
4. Notice of Results of Eligibility Check	26 June 2007
5. Issuance of Bid Documents	28 June 2007
6. Pre-bid Conference	3 July 2007
7. Receipt and Opening of Bids	17 July 2007

The BAC will issue to prospective bidders Eligibility Forms at **Physical Plant Division (PPD), PhilRice-CES** upon their submission of a LOI, and upon their payment of a non-refundable amount of **Php 200.00** to the PhilRice Cashier. Prospective bidders shall submit the Eligibility Requirements to the BAC at the said address. They may also obtain the results of the Eligibility Check by the BAC at the same address.

The BAC will issue Bidding Documents only to bidders declared by the BAC to be eligible for the bidding upon payment of a non-refundable amount of **PhP 5,000.00**, respectively, to the PhilRice Cashier.

PhilRice assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of their bids.

PhilRice reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, and to annul the bidding process and reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

Approved by:

(Sgd.) **LEO C. JAVIER**
BAC Chairman

(PDI--June 8 & 13, 2007)

Republic of the Philippines
SOCIAL SECURITY COMMISSION
Makati City

MERCEDES REYES,
Petitioner,
versus -
EDNA T. BELTRAN and the SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM,
Respondents.

SSC Case No. 8-16990-06

x - x

SUMMONS

MS. EDNA T. BELTRAN

GREETINGS:

You are hereby required to file within fifteen (15) days from the date of publication of this Summons with the Office of the Clerk of the Commission, 12th Floor, SSS (Makati) Building, 6782 Ayala Avenue corner Rufino Street (formerly Herrera Street), Makati City, your Answer to the Petition for benefits accruing from the death of SSS member Roger Reyes.

You are further required to **serve a copy of your Answer upon the petitioner** through her counsel, Atty. Geraldine B. Sabellano at the Public Attorney's Office, Makati District, Ground Floor, Gusali ng Katarungan, 2228 F. Zobel Street, Makati City, and **upon the SSS** through the Senior Vice-President, Legal and Collection, East Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City.

If you fail to answer within the time prescribed above, the Hearing Commissioner, may upon motion of the petitioner or *motu-proprio*, declare you in default and shall forthwith proceed to receive the petitioner's evidence *ex-parte* and thereafter recommend to the Commission either the granting or denial of the petition as the evidence may warrant.

SO ORDERED

Makati City, Philippines, April 17, 2007.

SOCIAL SECURITY COMMISSION

(PDI – June 8, 2007)

BOARD OF INVESTMENTS dti

NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that **PHIL. BXT CORP** is applying for registration with the Board of Investments (BOI) as new operator of tourist accommodation facilities (Class "AAA Resort") on a Pioneer status, with project site located at M.L. Quezon Highway, Barangay Maribago, Lapu-lapu City, Cebu.

Any person with valid objection/s on the above-mentioned project may file his/her objection in writing, under oath, with the BOI within three (3) days from the date of this publication.

(Sgd.) RUDY B. CAÑA
Director
Project Evaluation and Registration Department

(PDI – June 8, 2007)

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PANASONIC MANUFACTURING PHILIPPINES CORPORATION

PMPC ORTIGAS AVENUE EXTENSION, TAYTAY, RIZAL

NOTICE OF STOCKHOLDERS' MEETING

Notice is hereby given that the 2007 Annual Meeting of Stockholders of **PANASONIC MANUFACTURING PHILIPPINES CORPORATION** will be held at the Human Development Center, Panasonic Manufacturing Philippines Corporation, Ortigas Avenue Extension, Taytay, Rizal on June 15, 2007 at 5:00 P.M.

The agenda of the meeting is as follows:

1. National Anthem
2. Call to Order
3. Establishment of the Quorum
4. President's Annual Report
5. Approval of Minutes of the 2006 Annual Stockholders' Meeting
6. Financial Report
7. Ratification of all acts, resolutions and proceedings of the Board of Directors and Management since last years Annual Stockholders' Meeting
8. Election of new members of the Board of Directors
9. Appointment of External Auditors
10. Other Business
11. Adjournment

The Board of Directors has fixed the close of business on May 30, 2007 as the record date for the determination of stockholders entitled to notice and to vote at said Annual Meeting.

Stockholders who will not be able to attend the meeting may designate their respective proxies and send the proxy forms to the Office of the Corporate Secretary not later than June 8, 2007.

MANAGEMENT, HOWEVER, IS NOT SOLICITING YOUR PROXY. Corporate stockholders should attach to their proxies their board resolution designating authorized representative.

Registration starts at 2:00 P.M. on the scheduled meeting. For your convenience in registering your attendance, please present any form of identification such as your Professional I.D., Passport or Driver's License.

Taytay, Rizal, May 2, 2007.

MAMERTO Z. MONDRAGON
Corporate Secretary

(PDI–June 8, 2007)

Zamboanga City Electric Cooperative, Inc.
(ZAMCELCO)
Zamboanga City

INVITATION TO BID

The Zamboanga City Electric Cooperative, Inc. (ZAMCELCO) at Putik, this city per requisite under Board Policies on Pre-Qualifications, and Bids and Awards, invites ALL interested Bidders/ Suppliers to bid for the supply of the following electrical materials/equipment/items, to wit:

No	Quantity	Unit	Item Description
1	11	UNITS	25KVA DIST. TRANSFORMERS
2	1	UNIT	37.5 KVA DIST. TRANSFORMER
3	11	UNITS	50KVA DIST. TRANSFORMERS
4	2	UNITS	75KVA DIST. TRANSFORMERS
5	3	UNITS	100 KVA DIST. TRANSFORMERS
6	1	UNIT	167 KVA DIST. TRANSFORMER

JOB ORDER FOR FARM-OUT AGENCY LOT PRICE: P 1,168,805.00

You may secure the Pre-qualification Requirements from the office of the Finance Department, ZAMCELCO Complex in Putik, this city anytime during office hours and submit the same upon completion of all requirements thereof.

Submission of the Pre-qualification Requirements shall not be later than 5:00 pm of June 7, 2007 and no documents appertaining thereto, shall be accepted thereafter.

All applicants will be duly notified as to the results of the pre-qualification eligibility process. Only those who are pre-qualified will be allowed to participate in the bidding. A post-qualification may be conducted accordingly hereafter.

Bidding will be conducted on June 14, 2007.

Sealed bid in duplicate copies should be submitted to the Committee on Bids and Awards at the Office of the Finance Department at the above-mentioned address on or before 2:00 p.m. of June 14, 2007. Five percent (5%) Bidder's Bond is required as a matter of policy. Payment of non-refundable bidding fee of P5,000.

The right to reject any or all bids, to waive any formality therein, or to accept such bid as may be considered advantageous to the coop is hereby reserved as an absolute prerogative of ZAMCELCO.

(Sgd.) REINERIO R. RAMOS
General Manager

(PDI--June 6 & 8, 2007)

For your Classified and Obituary Ads please call **637-2008**

OBITUARIES

BERNARDO D. HENSON
"Narding"

peacefully passed away in the Grace of our Lord on June 3, 2007 at the age of 83 in California, U.S.A.

His loving wife, **Glorietta P. Henson**; his children **Baby-ry, Guill, Willie, Albert,** and **Maita** (†); his sisters, **Marcelina H. Tiongson, Modesta H. Nepomuceno,** and **Nicanora H. Vargas**; and brother, **Francisco D. Henson** (†), other relatives and friends request the readers to pray for the eternal repose and happiness of his soul.

FELISA BONDOC VDA DE CANLAS

(1917 - 2007)
Widow of Antonio T. Canlas
of Sto. Tomas, Pampanga

passed away on Tuesday, June 5, 2007.

Her children **Filipinas, Rolan** (†), **Dante, Isabel,** and **Teresa,** their spouses, children and grandchildren request prayers for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her body lies in state at St. Louie Memorial Chapel, on McArthur Highway (in front of Camp Olivas), San Fernando, Pampanga until Friday, June 8, and will be transferred on Saturday, June 9 to Sto. Tomas Parish Church. Burial is on Sunday, June 10, after the 3:00 PM Mass.

OBITUARY REQUIREMENTS: ❶ Copy of Death Certificate ❷ Any Identification document (I.D.)

DEATH NOTICE

Francisco " Frank " V. Cruz
passed away in the Grace of our Lord on May 31, 2007 at the age of 56.

His remains lie in state in Lingayen, Pangasinan. His nephews & nieces request readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

More Classified Ads

Department of Agrarian Reform – ARCPD	Page B4
Department of Labor – NCR	Page B4
DEPED Misamis Occidental	Page B4
RSG Honeycomb	Page B5
Philippine Economic Zone Authority	Page B9
Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas	Page B9
National Food Authority	Page B9

"Though you are gone,
you will forever stay
in our hearts..."

DR. STEPHEN SY GAISANO, SR.
at 93

Beloved Chairman Emeritus,
Gaisano Group of Companies

Greatly missed by his loving wife, children, grandchildren, great grandchildren, nephews and nieces:

WIFE:
ANITA Y. GAISANO

CHILDREN:
ROSEMARIE GAISANO
STEPHEN, JR. & MARY GAISANO
ALEXANDER & JANET GAISANO

GRANDCHILDREN:
STEPHEN III & BEVERLY GAISANO
SYDNEY & LYNN GAISANO • SANDY & JORDAN TIU
ALEXIS JANE GAISANO • ALYSSA JAN GAISANO

GREAT GRANDCHILDREN:
SABRINA GAISANO • STEPHEN GAISANO IV

NEPHEWS and NIECES
JOSEPH · FRANCISCO · PETER · BENITO · PAUL · EDMUND
JAMES · JOHN · JACK · EDWARD · HANS · HERBERT · FRANK
BETTY · AMELIA · VICKY · JEAN · ELIZABETH · MARGARET
CONNIE · HEDY

His remains lie in state at the Cosmopolitan Funeral Homes,
Nivel Hills, Cebu City.
Requiem mass will be at 9:00 A.M. on June 9, Saturday.
After which, cremation will follow.

BUSINESS

PARCHED EARTH. Climate change is wreaking havoc on nature and Filipinos are becoming more worried about its effects than the economy, according to an AC Nielsen survey.

Climate change worries Filipinos, says survey

By Ronnel W. Domingo

FILIPINO NET SURFERS ARE becoming less concerned about the economy and worrying more about global warming, reflecting a world trend, according to AC Nielsen's latest consumer confidence survey.

AC Nielsen managing director Benedicto L. Cid Jr. said in a briefing yesterday that 40 percent of the Filipino respondents said that the economy was their biggest or second-biggest concern for the next half year, 7 points lower than results in the previous survey.

At the same time, following a hot summer with record temperatures, 10 percent said global warming was either No. 1 or No. 2 on their list of worries for the rest of the year, 7 points higher than in the last poll.

Worldwide, respondent who said so made up 18 percent of the total or 9 points higher, pushing global warming up to 4th place in the list of 11 possible concerns, which included-political stability, crime, terrorism, war, immigration, "other concern," and "none."

Overall, the economy was still the next six months' top or secondary concern, with 41 percent saying so, 2 points higher than in the previous semester.

Other top concerns were health and job security, posting 17 percent each.

Conducted between April 15 and May 1, the study is this year's first of two polls made via the Internet, which covered 26,486 respondents in 47 countries and territories in Europe, Middle East, Africa, Asia-Pacific, Latin America and North America, including some 500 from the Philippines.

AC Nielsen has been doing the study for the past four years, with the Internet chosen as the preferred medium in an effort to ease retrieval of information that are "globally comparative."

Cid also said the consumer confidence index for the Philippines went down one point to 103, but was still above the global average of 97 points and showing the steadiness in all aspects of the index-job prospects, personal finances and inclination to spend.

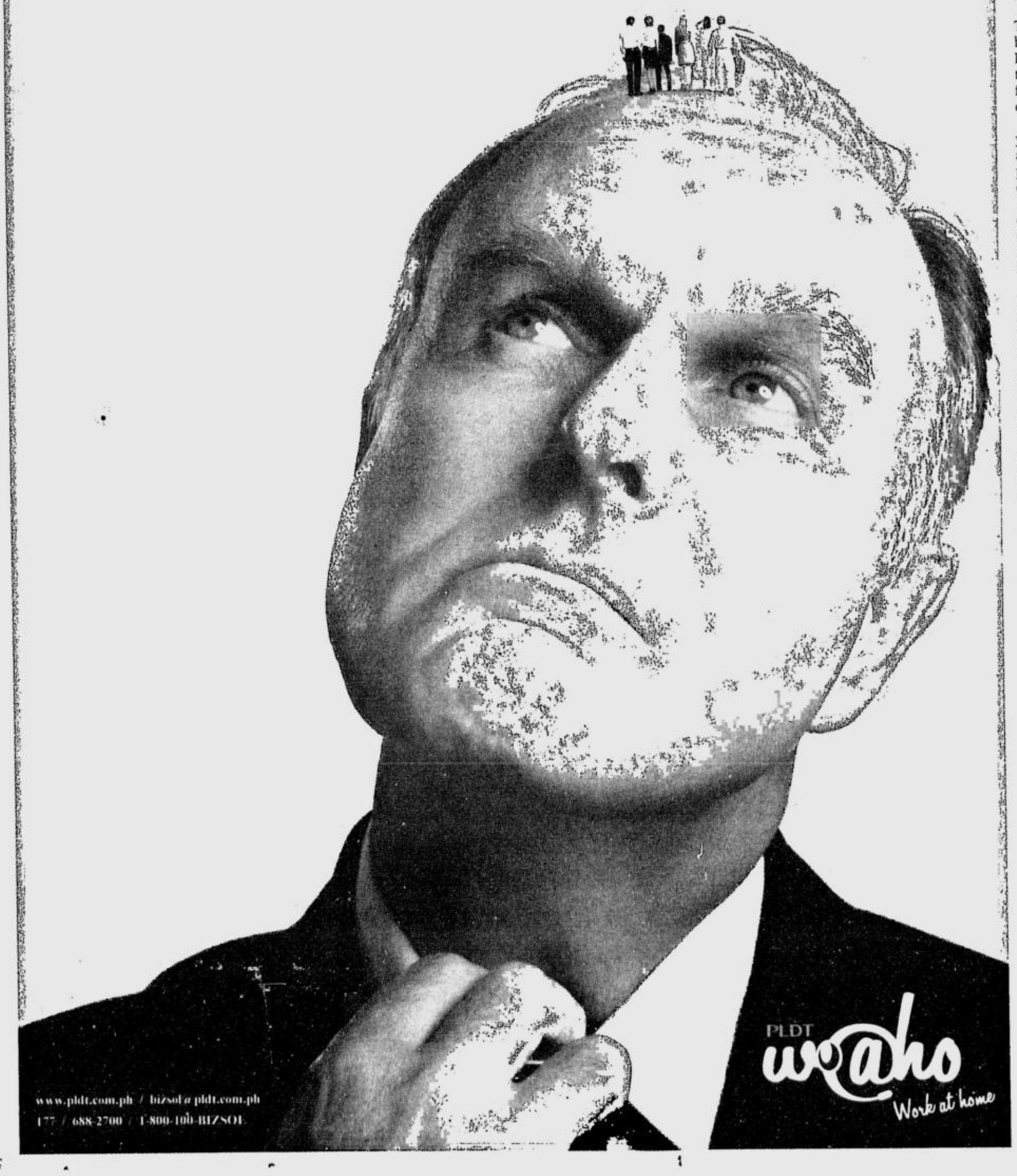
"This shows a sharp contrast to a drop of 9 points in Malaysia to 105 and 15 points in Thailand to 92," he added.

Off the top of your head... How many call center agents are you going to *lose* this year?

As a call center operator, you already know one of this year's most challenging problems will be HR-related, specifically agent retention and attrition. It's getting harder to keep your most valuable agents with your company. PLDT can help you do that.

The PLDT WAHO Guarantee: We guarantee clear and stable Voice Quality for your call center's connections to all your work-at-home agents; these connections are totally secured. We ensure that WAHO passes stringent test parameters that meet international call center standards.

With PLDT WAHO (Work at Home), you get the option of tapping into a growing portion of the workforce who otherwise can't be included into normal call center operations. Try WAHO now. The labor pool is larger and more flexible than you think.



BIR advised to link data with PHIC

By Michelle V. Remo

THE BUREAU OF INTERNAL REVENUE HAS been advised to link its database with the Philippine Health Insurance Corp. to address the twin problems of false payment claims from PhilHealth and tax evasion in the medical industry.

Finance Undersecretary Gil Beltran said yesterday in a briefing that plugging tax leakages due to the tax delinquency of self-employed individuals, like doctors, was still one of the biggest challenges facing the BIR.

"The two agencies should hook up their databases to help solve their problems," Beltran said. "By linking up their electronic records, the two may compare the amount of income declared by medical practitioners."

Beltran noted that while unscrupulous medical practitioners underdeclare their income to the BIR to pay lower taxes, they overdeclare to PhilHealth the cost of services they rendered to clients in order to get higher pay.

An official from PhilHealth earlier disclosed in a Senate inquiry that the state-owned firm has incurred P4 billion in losses since 1995, partly due to bloated claims covering medical services and medical operations.

Because of this, PhilHealth received P2.048 billion in subsidy from January to April this year, making it the biggest recipient of financial aid among all state-owned firms.

Palawan firm to send nickel to Korea, China

CANADIAN MINING EXPLORATION FIRM MBMI Resources Inc. announced it was close to making its first shipment of raw nickel products from its Alpha project in Palawan to customers in South Korea and China.

MBMI said in a statement that its subsidiary Narra Nickel expected to deliver cargo within 30 days.

"Narra Nickel has built a 7-km road into the permitted mining area, and ore is being prepared for transport from the mine site to the stockpiling location for beneficiation [treating ore to make suitable for smelting] and drying prior shipment," the Vancouver-based firm said.

MBMI said Narra Nickel has sales agreements for nickel products with several major consumers, including Posco of Korea and HG-MG of China.

MBMI said Narra Nickel's Alpha project was ideally located to supply the growing Asian nickel and stainless steel market, to which other mining operations in Palawan have been exporting.

MBMI and its Philippine partners jointly control full interest in eight nickel laterite projects in Palawan and Samar, covering an area of at least 22,000 ha. *Ronnel W. Domingo*

E-mail: business@inquirer.com.ph

Website: www.inquirer.net/business

Business Features Editor
Margie Quimpo-Espino

BUSINESS Friday

Different marketing strokes for 'buccaneering' entrepreneur

From creative names, free sampling to bilingual ads

ALBERT MG GARCIA EDWIN BACASMAS

By Margie Quimpo-Espino

TWO YEARS AGO PASCUAL LABORATORIES head Abraham Pascual bumped into Albert MG Garcia, founder of Garsworth Marketing Inc., owner of C-Lium Fiber.

Pascual, who said his wife uses C-Lium, offered to buy the firm. Garcia agreed and negotiations started. But failed.

Recently, talks resumed and a deal was struck—Pascual, a successful Filipino pharmaceutical firm with brands that include Betadine, Orocare, Potencee and Glutaphos acquired C-Lium Fiber from Garcia for an amount he declines to reveal.

Not bad for a venture started five-and-a-half years ago for only P5,000 and meant to address a physical disorder not everybody wanted to talk about—irregular bowel movement.

Garcia is the first to admit that C-Lium's success is largely a marketing one. He himself drew up the strategies. What is interesting is for his new products, he is adopting differing schemes but all aimed at achieving the same success of C-Lium.

DIFFERENT/ B2-2

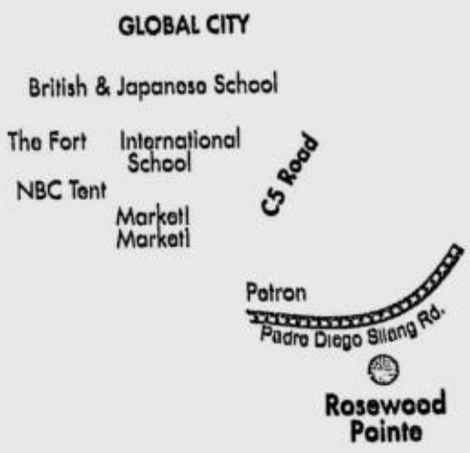
Rediscover the more important things in life.

HLURB License to Sell No. 16779

Raise your family on Asian values.

Make your home at Rosewood Pointe and rediscover what family truly means. Here, traditional Asian values like gentleness, hospitality, natural warmth and close family ties thrive, thanks to the thoughtfully designed Asian-inspired architecture that takes you back to a more thoughtful time where tradition and values flourish.

Perfect for growing families.
Strategically located along C5 in progressive Taguig, Rosewood Pointe is the ideal home for Filipino families due to its proximity to everyone's needs. It's only a few minutes away from Bonifacio Global City, while schools and hospitals are equally close.



Leave your everyday worries behind.
Like all DMCI Homes properties, security and the day-to-day maintenance of the building and facilities are handled by the Property Management Group, so you can focus on the more important things in life.

Live Smart with DMCI Homes.
Making Rosewood Pointe your home is one of the Smartest choices you can make. Developed and maintained by the country's only triple A builder/developer DMCI Homes, you're assured of a premium quality home that provides your needs and wants. With DMCI Homes, you never have to compromise. Because we know what's important to you.

A Smart Living concept by

DMCI HOMES

Because you know.

ROSEWOOD POINTE

Life blooms with Asian values.

At Rosewood Pointe, the Asian atmosphere, as well as the first-class amenities and lush landscaping are conducive to strengthening relationships and building new ones. Celebrate your daughter's first birthday with a private party at the Clubhouse. Do a few laps in the swimming pool. Join the kids as they feed the fish in the Koi pond or read a magazine as they play with their friends at the Oriental-inspired Central Park. With 8,000 square meters dedicated to amenities alone, you're sure to find something the whole family can enjoy.

Call 888-3333 or visit www.dmcihomes.com for any inquiries. Avail of a unit at the Jade Tower and enjoy low downpayment and easy installment terms, for as low as P25,200 per month for 25 months, interest-free.

Recapture precious family moments via board games

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

PATRICK PESENGCO STILL REMEMBERS how he and his family used to while away many happy afternoons playing board games like Monopoly Classic and Cluedo.

Those were the days before computers and video games invaded the living rooms in many homes that left children and their parents playing on their own.

No more rolling the dice or playing card games for these families.

The 36-year-old Pesengco, however, is confident that if the right kind of board games and other fun-educational games are brought back into the market, families will be encouraged to recapture those priceless bonding moments.

This was the philosophy that gave birth to the Hobbes and Landes chain of stores retailing board games, puzzles, arts and crafts materials and gadgets for scientific experiments.

"I do not have anything against video games. They are fun, but people do not really play with one another. Playing them is a very individual experience, unlike board games," Pesengco says.

He shared a similar passion for the old board games with a couple of friends and they pitched in P4 million to bankroll the first Hobbes shop at the Greenbelt Mall 3 in Makati City.

Not many people, were convinced that such a shop will succeed, especially with the popularity of the Internet, multi-player games, Game Boys, the PlayStation and the Xbox.

It also does not help that its products are quite expensive, and out of reach of the mass market.

"Others told me that such a concept will not work given the market and they asked why I should spend a lot of time on it," he says.

"But we had good intentions and we really thought that there was a strong demand out there for products such as ours," he adds.

The high-end market did not let Hobbes down. It got a loyal clientele just a year after the 96-square meter store opened.

But more than the sales, Pesengco says it is seeing families picking out games they can play together which gives him the greatest satisfaction.

"The idea was really to share a passion and to get others to enjoy what we enjoyed when we were younger," he says.

The Hobbes and Landes group now has nine outlets including one at the Trinoma in Quezon City and the flagship store called Hobbes and Landes Universe at the Bonifacio High St. at the Fort Bonifacio Global City.

Covering 363 square meters, the flagship store is divided according to categories—arts and crafts, science and board games.

Sections on books and even pets were added to the mix.

"Our focus really is on relationship building. We want to help promote a wholesome family lifestyle," he says.

Allowing Hobbes and Landes to carve its niche in the competitive retail market is its line of products, most of which are exclusively sold at its shops.

Pesengco says the company has struck exclusive distributorship agreements for as much as 80 percent of the products.

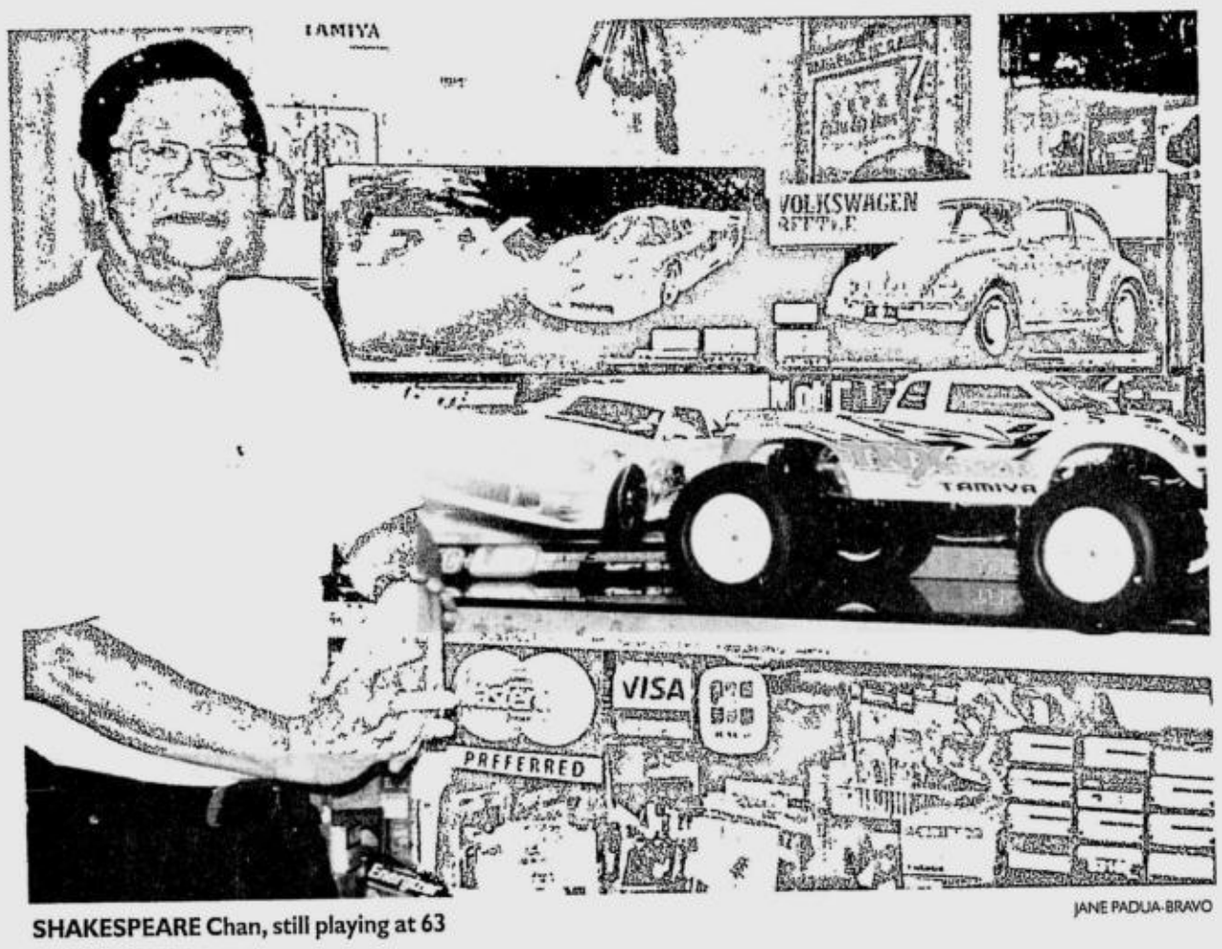
This agreement makes Hobbes and Landes a destination shop for those looking for specialty products.

THE HIGH-END market did not let Hobbes down. Today it has nine outlets.

Pesengco says Hobbes and Landes is a favorite for those looking for gadgets related to the sciences, such as telescopes, experiment kits and brain benders, although board games remain the heart and soul of the stores.

There are plans to take the Hobbes and Landes concept to the provinces and Pesengco says there is also the possibility of branching out into other specialized retail businesses.

And it all began with the love for the board game.



SHAKESPEARE Chan, still playing at 63

JANE PADUA-BRAVO

Man's hobby turns big biz

By Senen Bravo

WHEN SHAKESPEARE CHAN, 63, RODE on the success of Tamiya he knew going the extra mile was the key.

For thirty-four years, Chan has consistently made inroads into a growing hobby market through his Lil's Hobby Center.

"Rain or shine customers just want to enjoy their RCs and do their model kits," says Chan.

"Tamiya Japan has considered the Philippines a viable market after the mania created by 4WD [wheel drives] seven years ago," says Chan, who helped put up a Tamiya manufacturing plant in Mactan, Cebu in the '80s. Tamiya Cebu runs a printing press, mould section and assembly area.

During Tamiya's boom Chan had to deal with long queues at Lil's Hobby Center (Megamall) and Lil's-Futaba. He even had to fly to Japan from time to time to meet increasing demand.

"Our hands were really full most of the time," says Chan.

When demand was increasing, Tamiya Japan put up two more lines of machinery that ran 24 hours. Workers were also required to spend overtime during holidays, he says.

While Chan's business was steadily gaining ground, pirates came, eating up 40 percent of his market share.

Despite the drop in sales, he had a base of loyal customers, mostly children, who preferred the real thing.

"Thanks to my discriminating customers who have grown accustomed to my products," says Chan.

After the 'Tamiya craze' Chan focused on remote control (RC) toys.

He also joined the Federation Aeronautique Internationale (FAI), the world governing body for helicopter and plane RC competitions, to perk up interest in the sport.

Last April, Alvin Alcantara, an RC hobbyist playing for Chan's shop, topped the FC3 category of the Hirobo Cup Asia 2007 in Cebu. Using an Eagle 3 model helicopter, he bested bets from South Africa and Taiwan.

A select team of RC players are gearing up for the 12th RC Helicopter Championship in Poland from July 27 to Aug. 5 this year, he says.

Chan also actively supports local teams who are slated to compete in the Tamiya Asian Cup.

Chan set up a PBC-type race track at the Park Square parking lot, where RC aficiona-

MAN'S HOBBY/ B2-3

Different marketing strokes ...

From page B2-1

In 2001, after being introduced by a sister to psyllium husks, Garcia brought home 20 kilos of the fiber, repacked it and gave it to friends to try. Psyllium husks are meant to aid in digestion and the lowering of cholesterol. In more direct terms it is meant to ease constipation and irritable bowel movement—disorders suffered by thousands (if not millions) of Filipinos, but which few would like to talk about, except perhaps to their doctors.

"Nobody talked about digestive disorders," Garcia admits even if nearly everybody suffers from this occasionally.

The feedback from his friends was good. Psyllium did what it was supposed to do and they asked for more. Thus started a direct selling business for the businessman who lived in Australia a good part of his life. But his packaging then was crude—see through plastics placed with one tablespoon of psyllium, sealed manually and placed in big sachets with a mimeographed article of what it was.

"Our packaging was like that of *mani* (nuts)," Garcia recalls.

After six months, he decided to go mainstream. As luck would have it, Mercury Drugstore founder Mariano Que was a user of C-Lium too, so when Garcia expressed interest to sell in the drugstore chain, Que was interested.

But Mercury told Garcia to change its packaging before they would carry it.

Garcia asked for six months to work on his packaging and came up with a technical but high-end looking packaging complete with full-color laminated information materials on what psyllium husks are and what these can do to the body.

"There was a quantum increase in sales," Garcia admits.

Garcia's biggest advantage he says is having been able to register the brand name first. Since the Latin word psyllium is not a common one, he conjured C-Lium—the phonetic name of the product. Garcia's humor is there as the full brand name is CRx C-Lium.

Think about it, Garcia says, when the competitor describes its product (made from psyllium), "they will always mention my brand."

Although started with little capital, Garcia invested in the marketing of C-Lium. Each pack of the fiber included an information material that was of good quality printing and explained fully about the digestive system of the body and what psyllium can do to aid digestion and regulating bowel movement.

This replaced the mimeographed sheets he used to include in the C-Lium packs.

Garcia also invested heavily in advertising—print in particular.

"I was the only entrepreneurial venture that continued advertising for five years nonstop," he says.

His ads were geared toward educating the readers about digestive disorders. A turning point was his "Are you a floater or a sinker" ad which asks the readers whether they have enough fiber in their system and determining this based on their feces.

"I experimented on the psychology of people regarding their biological needs that they never want to talk about."

He says the ad created a buzz and people were talking about it and asking each other the question.

Garcia also gave away a lot of trial packs and gave samples in many medical conventions. What happened was patients were asking their doctors about the husks and this created awareness.

Pascual's purchase is enough proof of its success.

While Garcia, 59, may have exited from C-Lium, he is leaving the business world. This year is proving to be a very busy one for him with the launch of new products under a new firm, Whealth Inc.

The interesting aspect of his entrepreneurship is he adopts a different marketing strategy for each new product.

Endorsement route

Early this year, he launched ABW-alfalfa, barely and wheat in one capsule. Raw materials are imported from Australia and Garcia says there is no product like this in the country.

Unlike his strategy for C-Lium, Garcia took the endorser route for ABW tapping singer Pilita Corrales. He says she used to take alfalfa, barley and wheat in separate capsules when she lived in Australia. ABW is supposed to help the body absorb vitamins better and provide extra energy.

Garcia claims it is the first food supplement that addresses internal aging as it is an antioxidant aimed at slowing down aging.

Garcia says he got an endorser because unlike C-Lium wherein the effect can be felt after one to two days, ABW will need about a week for its effect to be felt.

'Me-too' product

So far all of Garcia's products are new segments in the market. But last month, he launched what he calls his only 'me-too' product because of the existence of the segment and strong players.

Garcia launched Gargol mouthwash. with a brand positioning of a mouthwash that uses all natural ingredients and has no alcohol and sugar (it uses xylitol, a natural sweetener from the birch tree).

For this product, Garcia tapped an ad agency because he said he wanted the insights on the product be put into words in a more structured way. They conducted focus group discussions to determine the different flavors preferred for a mouthwash.

Even the "pink" market was tapped because Garcia says they are "good barometers" for new products.

The result is an apple, orange, strawberry and peppermint flavored mouthwash.

Since Muslims cannot take alcohol [contained in other mouthwashes], Garcia says they are also tapping this market for Gargol, setting up billboards in Zamboanga for the product.

He knows he is up against giant brands like Listerine but he says they are after "creating a new set of oral mouthwash users who are after price consideration [Gargol is cheaper than the popular mouthwashes] and who prefer it to be natural based."

Cranberries for UTI

On June 18, Garcia is set to launch another product that is new in the market—CranUTI, a cranberry supplement aimed at providing relief to urinary tract infection.

Garcia's son, Laurindo, who is Whealth's vice president, cites that there are studies showing eight million doctor visits a year are due to UTI and one out of five Filipinos develop the infection at least once in their lifetime.

At present UTI is cured via antibiotics.

For the launch of CranUTI, Garcia will use bilingual print ads—the first the country.

The print ads will be feature actual women who have suffered from UTI. The text of the ads are both Filipino and English.

Although the supplement is already available in Mercury Drugstores, the ads will still be launched third week of June.

HOLDING up his latest product—the Gargol oral wash.

Entrepreneur par excellence

Garcia's first entrepreneurial venture was in 1966 as a college freshman. A La Salle football hall of famer, he was with the Philippine team. In a trip to Japan he saw a knapsack (of the drawstring kind) and bought several to sell. It sold well and he would keep on buying abroad and selling in Manila.

But he never thought of manufacturing it and one day he saw locally made ones in the market.

After graduating from La Salle he worked in an ad agency. When Martial Law was declared he was sent to Australia where he lived for over 20 years. There he engaged in trading, getting various foodstuff from Asia, labeling it with his brand, and selling in Australia.

When he to came back to the Philippines, he and some friends created Krunchie Munchies—the first flavored *chicharon* in the country. Unfortunately duty issues on the imported pork rink created problems and made them drop the business.

He is also active in the Philippine-Australia Business Council and is constantly thinking of new products to introduce in the country.

Although he is the only one among seven siblings who went into business, he believes his entrepreneurial streak was influenced by his childhood experiences.

He lived in Madrid for the first eight years of his life during the post-Franco era when Spain was going through interesting times.

When his family went back to Manila, he only spoke Spanish. As a grade one student in Letran, he sat through classes for six months without understanding his lessons. During breaks, he would go to the priests—the only ones who spoke Spanish.

By grade 5 he transferred to La Salle and already spoke fluent Filipino and English.

Garcia describes his strategies as "buccaneering" and largely out of the box. He hopes to continue this for a long time.

DESPITE PRESSURE FROM INTERNET

Ad exec says print media remains important

By Raquel P. Gomez

THE PRINT MEDIA WILL REMAIN IMportant to the advertising industry even though its existence is under pressure from the Internet and other digital medium for information dissemination such as mobile technology, according to Michael Birkin, chair and CEO of Omnicom Asia Pacific.

Birkin says the print media is "extremely important" particularly to Omnicom, a leading global marketing and corporate communications company. The Omnicom Group comprises of three global advertising agency networks (BBDO, DDB and TBWA), leading national advertising agencies in the United States, a global network of more than 175 marketing services companies, and two of the world's premier media planning and buying services (OMD Worldwide and PHD Network).

"Around the world and around the region, there are areas where print media is performing extremely strong. High-level fashion magazines, for example, are doing very well. It's my view that print media will always play a very important role in the future of our business. Print media is still the best way of browsing for information even if the Internet may be more effective in searching for information. There has to be no reason why the two won't sit happily together in the future."

Omnicom, which posted revenues of $11.4 billion in 2006, is currently the biggest global player in nontraditional marketing, from sales promotion, healthcare marketing and public relations to newer disciplines such as interactive marketing. More than half of Omnicom's revenue now comes from these areas.

Omnicom recently acquired MobileMango, a US mobile marketing company that employs advanced technology platforms for mobile message and campaign management. The move is an indication that the company is taking the digital platform seriously.

"It's obvious that the Internet is changing the pattern of behavior of the young generation. The use of digital media is a complex subject, whether computers or mobile phones can increase the part of the brand message. Our business has a very strong digital requirement or ambition, but the fundamentals of our business didn't change. And to work out the use of digital media and the Internet as part the media link is more important now than it was ten years ago and it's going to be more important again in ten years' time."

Birkin says the company has not set any figures as to how much of its business will eventually target the digital media in the future, but the current focus of the company is the emerging markets in Asia, particularly China.

SERGE Dumont, president of Omnicom Asia Pacific and Michael Birkin, chair & CEO of Omnicom Asia Pacific.
EUGENE ARANETA

"All major markets are important to us. Obviously China is largely important because the world is looking at it and heading there. China is growing faster than any markets right now. Many brands are already there and we see the emergence of Chinese brands."

He says part of Omnicom's plan in China is to make the marketplace be more aware of the importance of the different forms of media to promote brands. Omnicom plans to develop a number of programs to help major institutions and universities in China with their communications program. This is patterned after Omnicom's program of recruiting the best people and eventually training them in the Omnicom University, which is the company's ambitious education initiative to help build up the company's intellectual capital.

"We offer advancement programs which would bring us senior executives. I think that the increasing education of Chinese people is leading to a greater awareness of print media and other forms of media so there'll be increasing amount read and seen by that population."

With another Omnicom executive Serge Dumont, president Omnicom Asia Pacific, Birkin is in the country to oversee Omnicom's operations, which he describes as "performing strongly" and enjoying "outstanding growth." Omnicom's operations here include DDB Philippines, PHD, TBWA Santiago Mangada Puno Advertising, OMD Philippines, BBDO Guerrero Ortega and Fleishman Hillard Pte Ltd.

"One of the reasons why we're here is because we are interested on the back of that growth to see what more we could handle. Our advertising agency brands are all in very strong shape. In our opinion we have an excellent creative application here in the Philippines."

Bosconian International Chamber of Commerce meets on June 15

THE BOSCONIAN INTERNAtional Chamber of Commerce Inc. (BICC) will hold its 7th General Membership Assembly on June 15 at the Hampton Room of Astoria Plaza in Pasig City. Registration starts at 5:30 p.m.

Guest of honor and speaker is Benel P. Lagua, president and chief operating officer of the Small Business Guarantee and Finance Corporation. He is an alumnus of Don Bosco Mandaluyong (HS 1972).

BICC will present Achievement Awards to two distinguished alumni of Don Bosco Pampanga: Architect Nestor S. Mangio for the private sector and Fr. Eddie T. Panlilio for the public sector.

Mangio is chair and president of Central Country Estate Inc. while Panlilio is the governor-elect of Pampanga.

BICC is the first and only school-based international business organization of Bosconian professionals and businessmen. It was organized in 2004 and has over 400 members.

Tickets are available at the BICC Secretariat, tel. 5343481 or 5311347, e-mail bicc_ph@yahoo.com.

DOT readies marketing blitz at Korea travel fair

THE DEPARTMENT of Tourism (DOT) is preparing a strategic and tactical marketing offensive in Seoul to further increase its fast-growing captive market in Korea, now consistently the Philippines biggest source of foreign tourists.

This marketing blitz, according to DOT Secretary Joseph Ace H. Durano, will be launched during the Korea World Travel Fair (KOTFA) 2007 on June 7 to 10 at the Convention and Exhibition Center (COEX), Korea's main cultural and events venue.

"To be launched at KOTFA is a 5-minute video of our new 'Beyond the Usual' campaign highlighting the uniqueness of Philippine destinations, festivals and parties, shopping and bargains, lifestyle and honeymoons, health and wellness, history and traditions, and nature, culture and adventure, and many other activities that set our country apart from the rest of Asia," Durano said.

"Beyond the Usual will serve as our general world campaign while the '7107: Philippines - More Than You Can Imagine' marketing program being implemented in Korea is specifically targeted at our four primary market segments in the peninsula - holiday seekers, students, honeymooners and special interest groups - thus ensuring Korean arrivals to the Philippines all year round," Durano explained.

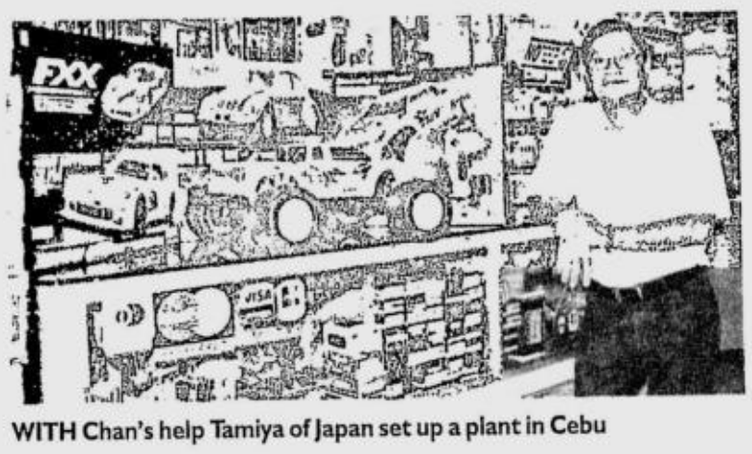
He also pointed out that the launch of the 7107 tagline was deliberately timed for KOTFA this June, the start of the summer holidays in Korea. "In fact, KOTFA will also be the venue for the launch of the maiden issue of DOT Team Korea's quarterly newsletter 7107: Philippines Travel News because it's during this period that our entire marketing campaign can be effectively geared, not only towards all our four priority market segments, but also the Korean families and all outbound summer vacationers," Durano added.

Aside from heading the Philippine delegation, the tourism chief will again grace the KOTFA opening ceremony as guest of honor. To maximize his short visit, he has scheduled a business meeting with Seoul Mayor Oh Se Hoon and a fellowship gathering with wholesalers of the Korean travel trade.

The theme of the Philippine exhibit will focus on Davao City, in time for its colorful celebration of Kadayawan, a festival of flowers, fruits, food, and fun held every third week of August to pay tribute to its rich and diverse culture and the bounties of nature.

"So the cover story of our 7107: Philippines Travel News, which is written in Korean, is about Kadayawan and Davao City," said DOT Team Korea Head Maricon Basco-Ebron, also the Philippine tourism attache to Korea.

Joining the DOT in KOTFA are airline firms, tour operators, hotels, resorts, and even a zoo, led by pr oud sponsor Philippine Airlines. Key destinations are represented by such tourist facilities as Casa del Mar Golf Resort, Costabella Tropical Beach Hotel, Marco Polo Plaza and Waterfront Airport Hotel for Cebu; Pearl Farm Beach Resort and Marco Polo Davao for Davao City; Pearl of the Pacific and La Carmela for Boracay; Avilon Zoo, Bahura Resort/Anilao Outrigger Resort, Microtel Inns & Suites and Century Park Hotel for Manila and its environs, and the Subic Legend Hotels and Casinos.



WITH Chan's help Tamiya of Japan set up a plant in Cebu

Man's hobby ...

From page B2-2

dos can regularly practice for upcoming competitions.

"Just like in real driving, the controller needs the proper skills to win," says Chan.

Early start

Growing up on Echague Street in Quiapo, then 8-year-old Chan would pass by a cockpit replica of a B17 airplane at Feati University. From then on his fascination for aircraft took flight.

Every day he would save his 50 centavo allowance, walking from Echague to Rizal Avenue. After two weeks of savings, he finally bought his kit, but the paint would have to wait.

"My parents won't buy me the other accessories, thinking that I had to earn the money for myself," says Chan.

When Chan was in his 20s, he worked as a sales representative for an airline company, allowing him to go abroad.

He went to Japan in the early '60s where he saw model kits come in different designs and scales. He also met the owner of Tamiya who became a friend. At the time, he adds, hobbyists had to settle for only one scale, unlike now where lots of scales abound. Scale models in Japan in the early '50s, Chan says, were made of wood.

"It's a block of wood that a modeler had to sculpt to approximate an image in the manual," says Chan.

When his unassembled model kits started to accumulate Chan decided to sell them.

He says today's model kit contains at the most 300-400 parts, details of which can be enhanced by Tamiya paints.

"On a good day and depending on my mood I can finish my kit from 8 p.m. to 2:30 a.m.," says Chan.

In 1972, he found a consignee, Lil's Gift Shop, at the then Maranaw Shopping Arcade where Landmark is now situated. The shop eventually morphed into Lil's Hobby Center after Chan married the owner's daughter.

In 1986 when trade was liberalized, Chan decided to open another branch, Tamiya-Futaba, at Park Square. By then he was the exclusive distributor of Tamiya products in the country.

Along the way Chan was introduced to Futaba, a Japanese RC transmitter manufacturer. Chan says a transmitter is a separate business from an RC vehicle.

Lil's Hobby Center arrived at SM Megamall in 1991. Yearly, Chan holds exhibits of scale models like action figures, tanks and planes. Last May 16, another branch sprouted at TriNoma in Quezon City.

"Through IPMS (International Plastic Modeling Society) we expect more enthusiasts to polish their skills in building model kits," says Chan.

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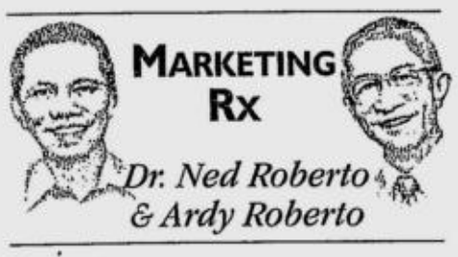
Jay Levinson's advice—get yourself a "marketing coach"



MARKETINGRx CONTINUES TO HOST JAY Conrad Levinson, bestselling author of the Guerrilla Marketing book series (more then 14 million copies sold) as our guest columnist. We'll be featuring his columns every other week until August 2007.

Every world champion has had a coach. Here's why the coaching industry is growing so fast and how it can make you a champion, too.

I make a presentation and watch as the audience takes careful notes, nods in agreement with what I say, then rises to its feet with applause. But deep in my heart, I know that only five percent of the people in the audience will actually take action based upon what they have learned.

These are bright people, motivated people, but the vast majority of them are just too busy or too overwhelmed by day-to-day business matters to implement the changes they know they must make. They have everything it takes to succeed except for one thing—follow-up.

It's that lack of follow-up that has led to the explosive growth of the coaching industry. And "explosive" might be an understatement. Fortune Magazine agrees: "The hottest thing in management today is the executive coach." Newsweek Magazine chimes in with their take on coaching: "They're part therapist, part consultant—and they sure know how to succeed in business." The Harvard Business Review tells us, "The goal of coaching is the goal of good management: to make the most of an organization's valuable resources." And The New York Times expands on this by saying, "... other companies offer coaching as a prerequisite ... in the understanding that everyone has blind spots and can benefit from a detached observer." Industry Week obviously goes along: "The benefits of coaching appear to win over even the most cynical clients within just a few weeks." Executive Female is even more specific: "Coaching is having a dedicated mentor; it's getting knowledgeable support and encouragement and a new way of looking at things when you need it."

Imagine closing the door to your office for 30 minutes and having your own private success coach right there. Or perhaps the perfect time is on your cellular phone during that tedious commute to and from work. In fact you can call from any state in the country.

It is clear that these days business coaching has been booming. It succeeds because it works. Consider this quote from D.A. Benton in "Secrets of A CEO Coach":

"If high achievers like Tiger Woods and Donald Trump have one (or more) for their jobs, why shouldn't you have one for yours? ... In today's competitive business market, having a personal coach is not a luxury, but a necessity."

The entire design of a coaching program is to get you to take action and then to stay with you to assure the proper follow-up. If a coach is nothing else, he's a master of implementation, and if he's a winning coach, he'll impart that mastery to you.

Here in the Philippines, perhaps marketing consultants can be compared to these coaches that Jay Levinson describes above. The same goes for the "unpaid" consultants or mentors who do it to leave a legacy and give back. Josiah Go is doing a good job not just coaching but mentoring and encouraging young marketing professionals through his Young Market Masters Awards program and his YMMA Foundation. He also coaches and mentors university students taking up marketing through his yearly MarkProf Bootcamp.

Seek out your marketing coach and mentor through informal lunches or meetings with your marketing director or boss. Seek out those who've been battle scarred in the marketing battlefield. Buy them lunch and ask them lots of questions. Listen to their stories. Take notes. Hey, you could even blog about it so that others can benefit as well. At the Maxwell leadership workshop that we attended last week, three Campaigns and Grey attendees told us that their mentor and coach was their boss—Yoly Ong.

So, who's your marketing coach or mentor?

Keep your questions coming. Send them to us at MarketingRx@pldtDSL.net. God bless!

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HSBC HAS LAUNCHED ITS FIRST global wealth management service for the growing number of mass affluent around the world.

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The enhanced Premier makes it easier for customers to take their bank accounts and credit history wherever they choose to live and work. It is now easier for customers to transfer their credit history when moving abroad in order to obtain credit facilities in another country.

HSBC Premier was first introduced in the Philippines in 2001. Since its launch in the country 6 years ago, the HSBC Premier business in the country has tripled in terms of number of customers and has quadrupled its volumes.

A Premier customer in one country is automatically entitled to be a Premier customer in other countries with minimum entry requirements waived. Overseas HSBC accounts can likewise be opened free of charge at the International Banking Centre prior to departure. Free fund transfers online between their own named accounts are likewise available. Further, HSBC introduces a functionality within Internet banking wherein customers can access all their HSBC accounts held in different countries through a single logon.

Customers may also enjoy pre-approved loans for overseas property purchase subject to local regulations as well as a pre-approved Premier MasterCard with waived annual fees. Local shopping, dining, hotel and recreational privileges and discounts await Premier customers when they travel overseas through the Home&Away offers.

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There are now 250 HSBC Premier Centres in 35 countries and territories. In the Philippines, customers have access to 16 Premier Centres.

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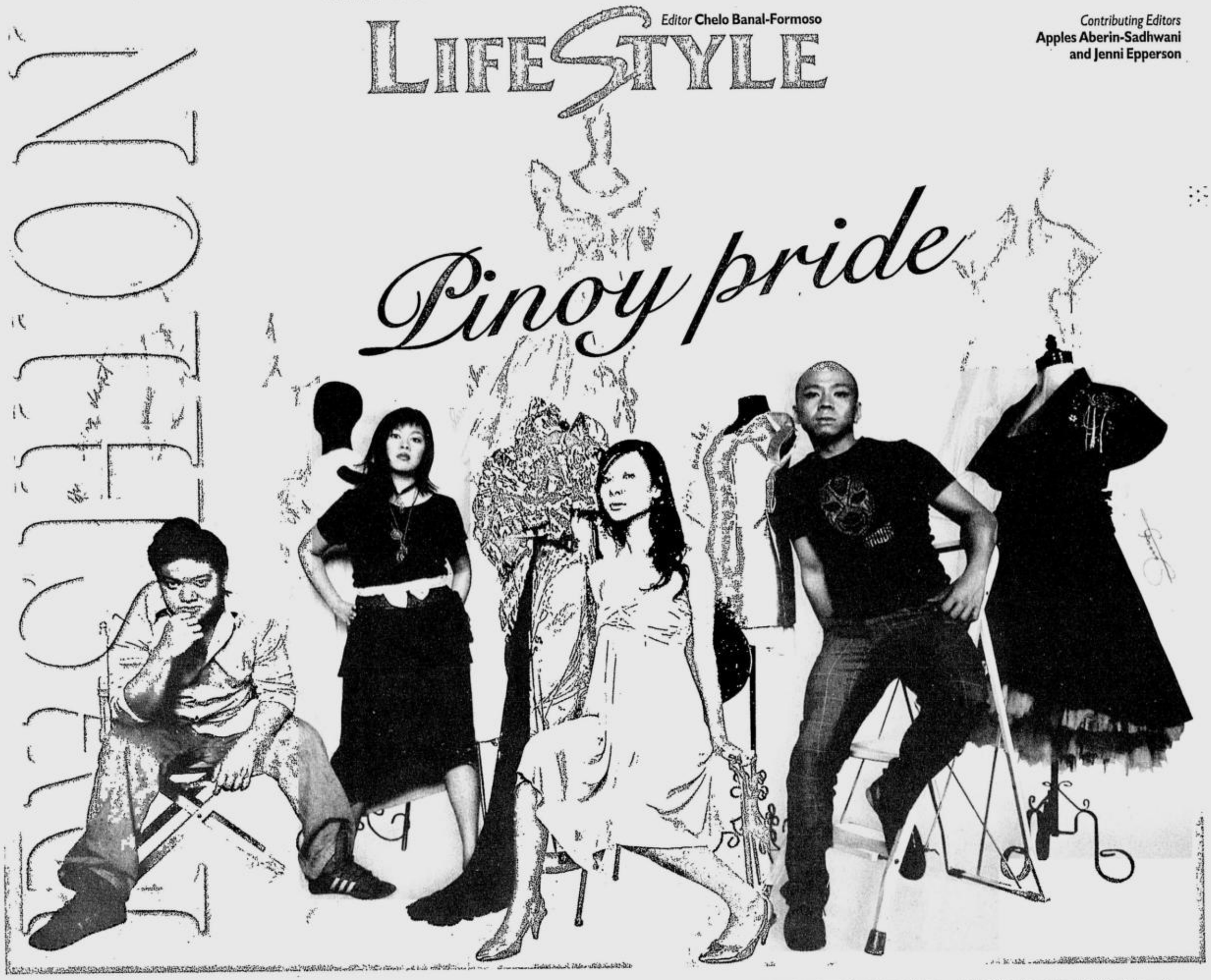
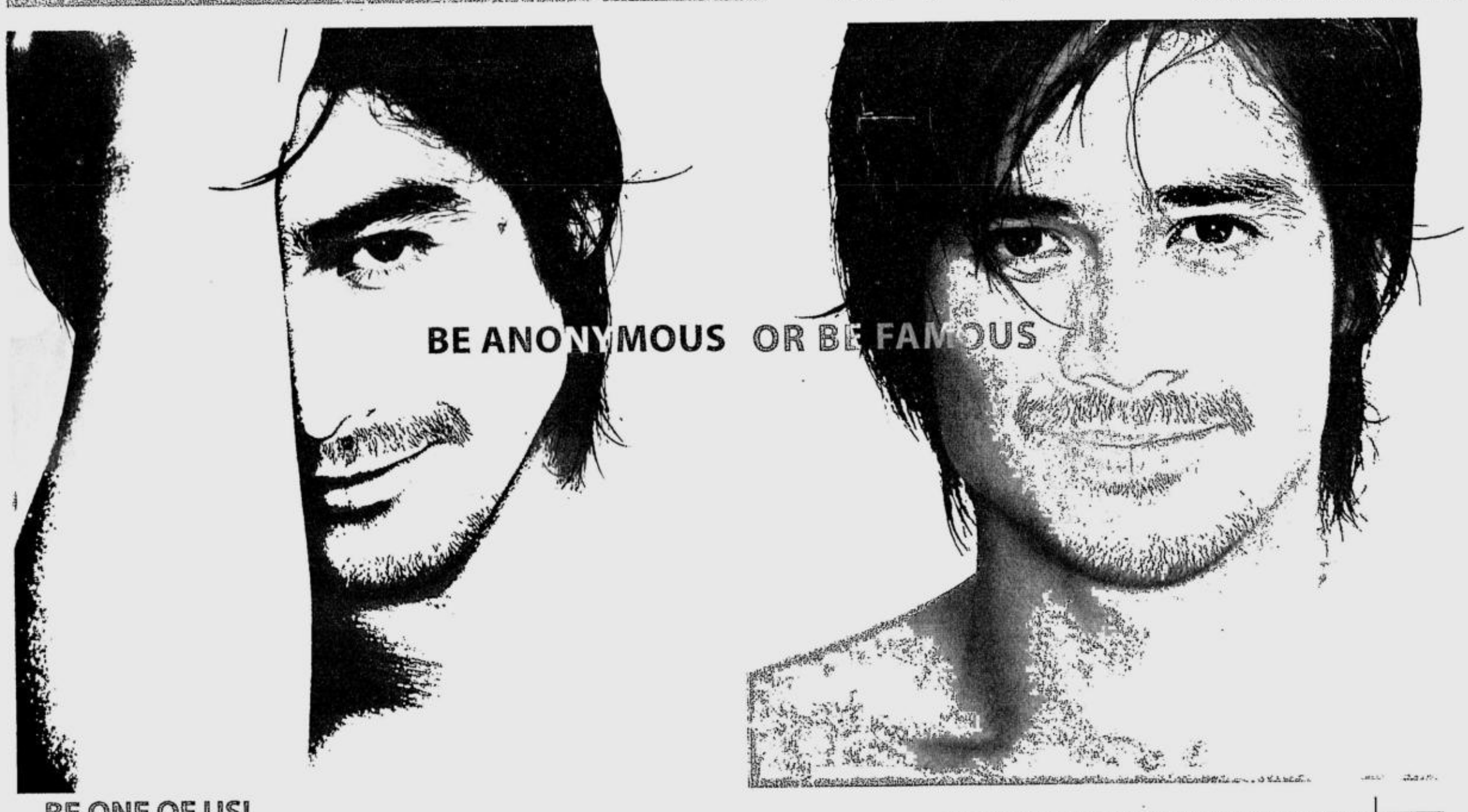
Pinoy pride





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Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 2208 series of 2007

Pinoy pride

IN CELEBRATION OF INDEPENDENCE DAY, HERE'S a shout-out to all Filipino designers who make us truly proud to be Pinoy!

APPLES' PICKINGS

Apples Aberin-Sadhwani

Here are the new turks of Philippine fashion design

To Rafé, Lesley Mobo, Monique Lhuillier, Cesar Gaupo, Bea Valdez and all those who've successfully ventured out to the highly competitive international fashion scene, kudos for putting us on the map and setting a wonderful example for all aspiring designers here in the Philippines. Yes, it is possible to dream big and to actually see one's dreams come to fruition.

To those who've stayed and who continue to elevate the standards of the local fashion industry—that means you, Inno Sotto, Auggie Cordero, Jojie Lloren, Cesar Gaupo (again!), among others—a big thank you for setting the bar and providing local clients a taste of high fashion at its finest.

To those who continue to build and promote local brands like Tyler, Aranaz, Bench, F&H, Kashieca, Kamiseta, Bayo and such, thereby promoting locally designed products, please continue to collaborate with our extremely talented homegrown designers, who are not only brimming with ideas but who also understand the market they are serving.

To all young designers and newbies out there, who continue to design and create in spite of limited resources, fueled only by passion for their craft, a big pat on the back for your tenacity and perseverance, which serve as an inspiration to others who are also struggling to be seen and heard.

We, in INQUIRER Lifestyle, hope to help spread the message that the Philippines is rife with talented individuals who need and deserve all the support they can get.

We also hope to serve as a venue for you, our dear readers, to discover new faces and talents, as well as rediscover older (but not necessarily old!) ones. With that, here are four relatively new designers, who have joined and won various competitions here and abroad, and who are slowly but surely making their marks in the local fashion industry.

E-mail the author at afashion@inquirer.com.ph

EMPIRE terno of crushed electric pleats with gold studs and rope, and a floral pin-tucked skirt on illusion tulle by Dimple Lim (tel. 0917-5748381)

Dimple Perez Lim, 25

First Grantee, Ben Farrales Scholarship Foundation, 2002; Crowd Favorite, Wild Vines Fashionista 2003; Second Place, Philippine Shoe Competition, 2003; Best in Casual, Fashion Institute of the Philippines Graduation Show, 2006; Bench Choice Award, Philippine Fashion Design Competition 2007

Educational background:
BS Interior Design—College of the Holy Spirit
Certificate in Patternmaking—Lasalle International
All Pattern courses—Fashion Institute of the Philippines

What's your design philosophy?
Imagination + reality = function. Everything is all about yin-yang. You have to be crazy but defined, fun and serious, avant-garde but wearable, old but new.

When and how did you get started in the fashion business?
I started in my parents' garments factory during my grade-school summer vacation. I would trim and pack T-shirts. Serendipitously, a few years ago, I would be in the same situation, but this time designing clothes for a street-wear brand. That was the time I affirmed that this is my destiny.

What are your current projects?
I'm working on a collection with my accessory-designer friend Jackie Tan and we will be launching it very soon. I'm also doing made-to-measure clothes for various clients and I'm collaborating with my cousin's retail company.

What makes you proud to be a Pinoy fashion designer?
It makes me all the more proud being a designer in a Third-World country like the Philippines. My sources of inspiration: creating and finding our own way, and eyeing things to come from a perspective unknown to global fashion. I'm proud to be in a sanctuary not many fashion people have discovered.

ASYMMETRICAL chiffon and satin dress with draped cutout by Aries Iñigo Lagat (tel. 0918-2906114)

Aries Iñigo Lagat, 24

Representative, Asean Skills Competition in Jakarta, Indonesia, 2003; Semi-finalist, Philippine Young Designers Competition 2005; Grand Prize winner, MEGA Young designer's Contest, 2006

Educational background:
I graduated at Ocsat (Ozamis City School of Arts and Trades) first in my class (and actually the only boy!) in Garment Technology in 2002. I also graduated from a Fashion Design course in Slims in 2004, from a scholarship that was given by Mr. Ben Farrales. Then, I took up a patternmaking course in FIP (Fashion Institute of the Philippines). I am currently teaching basic and advance patternmaking both for womenswear and menswear in FIP.

What's your design philosophy?
I am more of a tailored/experimental designer particularly in cuts and shape. My focus is always on the construction of the garment. It has to be precise, clean and well-executed. It's funny 'cause I was known for convertible pieces that I showed in the last MEGA competition. One time I made a cocktail dress for a client, and my students where asking me if it was going to transform into a jacket or a bag.

When and how did you get started in the fashion business?
I was 4 when my parents discovered my God-given talent for clothing design. I guess I broke their hearts when they realized I was going to be a fashion designer, and not a dentist or a seaman like they wanted me to be! But I guess I really started back in college where I made dance costumes for the faculty at school, then got a job as an assistant designer for Mimi Pimentel in Cagayan de Oro.

How do you hone your craft?
I always research, study all kinds of methods in patternmaking, making samples or prototypes for experimental projects and learning from every mistake that I make. As much as possible, I want to be hands-on 100 percent.

What do you hope to achieve in five years and what steps will you take to achieve it?
I'll have my own atelier or I'll be working for the great designers of the world like Christian Lacroix. I got a scholarship in Paris as my prize for the MEGA competition so I hope to take it early next year.

What makes you proud to be a Pinoy designer?
We are very talented and creative fashion designers and people. Jojie Lloren, Frederick Peralta, Carle Santiago and my favorite, Lesley Mobo, already proved that to the world. I just really hope and pray that Aries Iñigo Lagat would leave that kind of mark in the fashion industry.

Prisara Morales, 25

Finalist, Philippine Fashion Design Competition, 2007

Educational background:
AB Interdisciplinary Studies, Major in Communication and Fine Arts, Ateneo de Manila University; took up a few classes in Clothing Technology, University of the Philippines; took up Fashion Design, Patternmaking and Haute Couture, Fashion Institute of the Philippines.

What's your design philosophy?
I love clean and pure shapes and forms, which translate into a very minimalist sensibility in my designs. I am very much into the structure of the piece and the way its details are tailored, rather than unnecessary embellishments. I want to create nondisposable clothing, pieces that people will keep and still love to wear for years to come.

When and how did you get started in the fashion business?
I'd always been making clothes for myself since my early teens. That was around the time grunge was in fashion and my sister and I would scour second-hand stores for vintage clothes, which we would fix up and customize to our liking. It was very hands-on, very D-I-Y, and I absolutely fell in love with the whole process—choosing the material, designing, sewing and then the pleasure you get wearing something that you created. I realized then that I wanted to be a designer. A highlight in my career in the fashion business was apprenticing for Dita Sandico-Ong. A resilient figure in the local fashion industry, she imparted to me an appreciation of indigenous material and inspired me more than ever to pursue my dream.

What do you hope to achieve in five years and what steps will you take to achieve it?
I'd like to have established my clothing line by then and launch it into a serious business. At the moment, I've been developing miniature collections for my RTW line called Flight, but it's still in its infancy and not yet a full-fledged business. Another related but slightly off-tangent dream of mine is to set up a local design collective, something along the lines of the Surface To Air group, a modern-day version of Andy Warhol's Factory.

What makes you proud to be a Pinoy fashion designer?
The Pinoy fashion industry is made up of the most creative, talented people and I'm proud to be counted among such a group. I am also proud to be in a field that allows me to share my point of view, and art, with the world.

SILK shantung dress with cutout back and pleated underlayer by Prisara Morales (tel. 0906-4809111)

BLACK satin suede inverted corset over tent dress with kimono jacket by Jerome Salaya Ang (tel. 0917-5408097, 2520067)

Jerome Salaya Ang, 29

Finalist, Smirnoff Fashion Awards 1999; Representative, Philippine Young Fashion Designers Competition in Paris 2004 and 2005; Delegate, Asia Europe Foundation Young Designers Summit in Hanoi, Vietnam 2005; Representative, Asia Young Fashion Designers Competition in Singapore 2004 and 2005; Finalist, Mercedez-Benz International Fashion Awards in Malaysia 2006

Educational background:
Bachelor of Fine Arts, Major in Interior Design, University of Santo Tomas

What's your design philosophy?
Order in chaos. My signature style? Couture avant-garde.

When and how did you get started in the fashion business?
I started in the fashion business doing freelance designs for uniform companies. Then, I ventured into bridal fashions. I studied fashion in Saint Benilde under Inno Sotto, took further studies under Shanon Pamaong at the Fashion Institute of the Philippines. And also took draping courses at Raffles, Bangkok.

Who are the designers you look up to?
I admire Inno Sotto's simple elegance, Shannon Pamaong's pattern techniques, John Galliano's opulent frivolity, Alexander McQueen's impeccable tailoring and master showmanship, and Hussein Chalayans' innovation.

What do you hope to achieve in five years?
In the next five years, I plan to expand my horizons by venturing into pret-a-couture shoes, bags and accessories.

What makes you proud to be a Pinoy designer?
I'm proud to be a Pinoy designer because we are globally competitive and we are trained to make the best out of things. Given the lack of resources and technology, we still manage to be on the top.

Photography Che Mambong
Styling Millet V. Arzaga
Makeup Dj Agustin (tel. 0917-8539903)
Hair Ning Reyes
Graphic design Patrick Valiente

Timeless Issey Miyake

The renowned designer's unique aesthetic can be seen in his watch collection, created by an award-winning retinue of designers

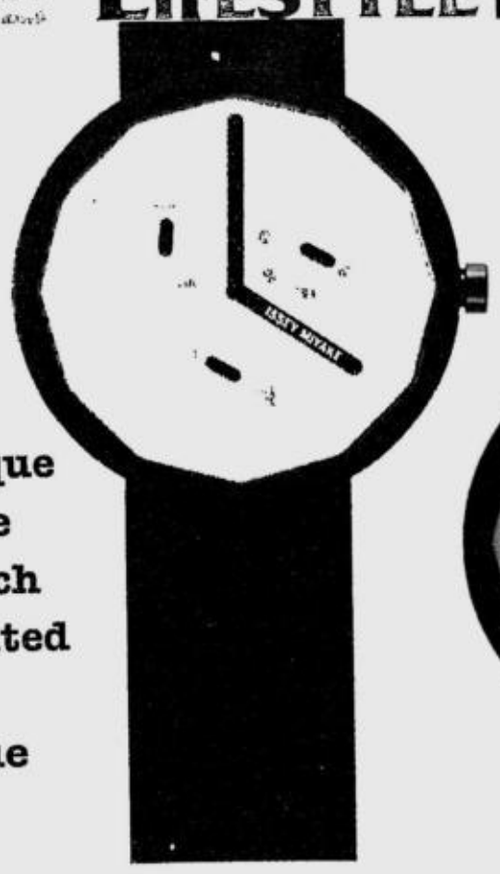
THE ICONIC ISSEY MIYAKE made his mark in the world with his technology-driven design sensibilities.

The renowned Hiroshima native, arguably the most famous Japanese designer in the world today, has successfully merged East and West with beautiful designs that have a distinct architectural construct with an emphasis on subtle details.

His creations manifest a philosophy of balance between tradition and technology, cutting-edge and craftsmanship. Today, Issey Miyake has stores in Tokyo, Paris, New York and London.

Issey Miyake's timeless design philosophy can be seen in his unique watch collection, created by an award-winning retinue of designers. Each watch piece is an architectural wonder that bespeaks a modern, innovative and subtly strong individual.

The watches explore form and function, interpreting shape and space with exquisite details. Each watch designer for the Issey brand is able to convey his or her own point of view with a particular creation, while remaining true to form with the Issey fashion philosophy.

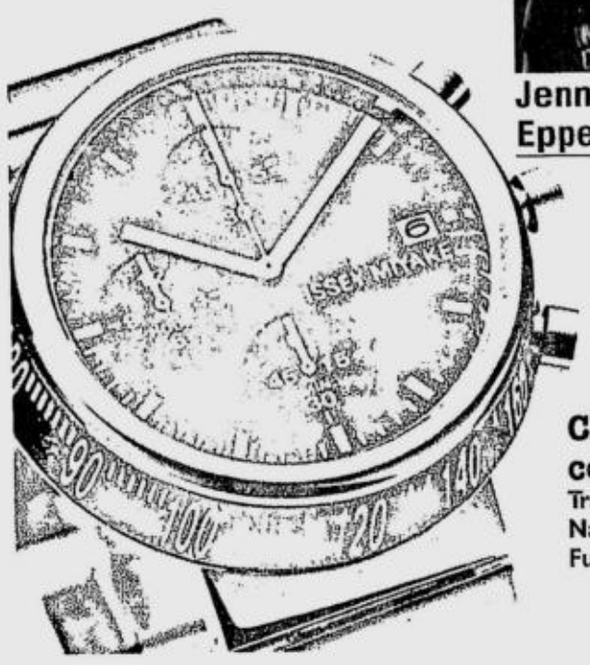


Modern times
Twelve by Naoto Fukasawa

Cool tempo
Vakio by Harri Koskinen

Timeless appeal
Vakio II by Harri Koskinen

Jenni Epperson



Chrono couture
Trapezoid by Naoto Fukasawa

Naoto Fukasawa, for "Trapezoid" and "Twelve" designs

Naoto Fukasawa is an award-winning product designer who has garnered more than 60 awards, including the Gold Industrial Design Excellence Award (Idea) of the USA, the Gold iF (International Forum) Product Design Award of Germany, and the Gold D&AD Global Award of England. He took off from the image of a trapezoid form in rotation to create his design. As such, the bezel is cut steeply, and numbers are proportioned like speed limits painted on a road surface. They are stretched in height to be readable normally when viewed from the front, despite their steep angles around the circumference.

For "Twelve," Naoto says, "I tried to design a watch which is as simple and as strong as possible. I wanted to eliminate all markings, even numbers, from the face. This inspired me to give the crystal itself twelve sides." (www.isseymiyake-watch.com)

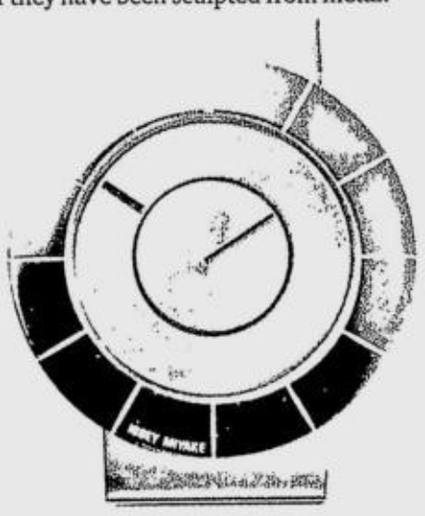
With the twelve angles of the case serving as the hour markers, he only had to add the hour and minute hands, both having the same width equal to the diameter of the central post. The result is a sharp face distinguished by the unique angular shape and wide hands.

Tokujin Yoshioka, for the "TO" series

Issey Miyake's creative vision and SII's advanced watch-making technology now embraces the design inspirations of Tokujin Yoshioka, giving birth to the new "TO" series.

The "TO" series reflects Tokujin Yoshioka's unique approach to design. The artist is an award-winning installationist and furniture designer who has likewise received numerous awards, including the A&w Award—The Coming Designer for the Future (2001) and the 2001 Mainichi Design Award (2002).

Yoshioka is also into minimizing design elements, with the result that the watches look as if they have been sculpted from metal.



Zen and the art of watchmaking
TO by Tokujin Yoshioka

Harri Koshinen, for "Vakio"

In Finnish, 'Vakio' means "constant" or "standard." There is truly a Scandinavian spirit behind the innovative Vakio designs of Harri Koshinen, an industrial designer gaining global fame. His Vakio concept is based on Northern European industrial design with an orientation toward "visual beauty in a design you will love forever."

The essence of the "Vakio2" design is a sculptural dial face evoking the winterland of Scandinavia, with a lime green second hand showing the first signs of spring. In contrast to the first-generation models featuring squared forms, the new Vakio distinguishes itself with a soft, rounded style and a wider range of design variations.

E-mail the author at jfashion@inquirer.com.ph

Issey Miyake watches are available at No Curfew, Shangri-La Plaza and SM Mall of Asia.

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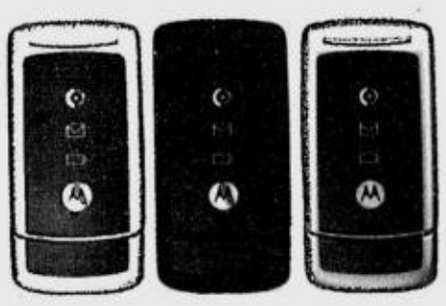

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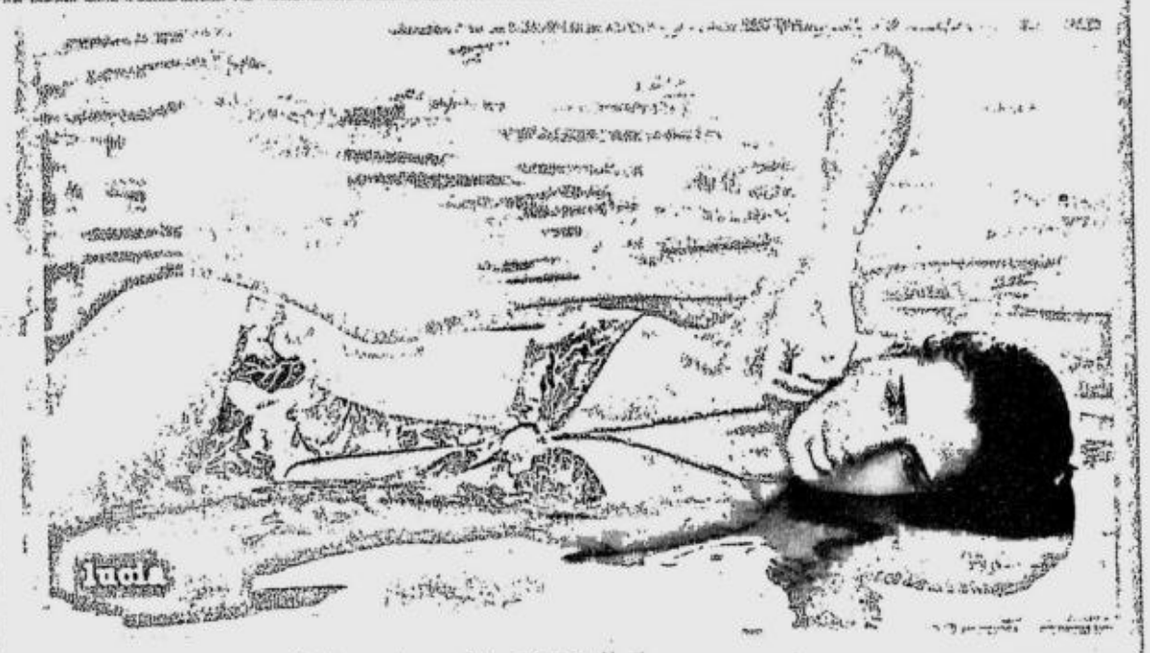
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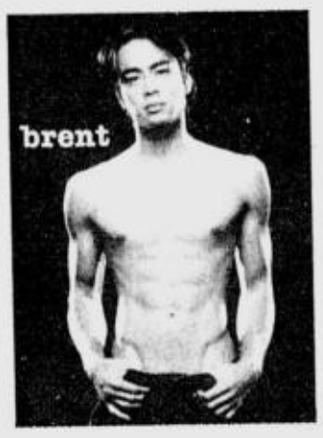
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War of the worlds

Foreign models are giving Pinoy mannequins tough competition

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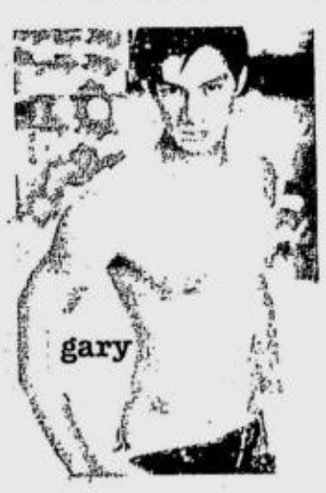
gary

By Alex Y. Vergara

(First of two parts)

FOR SOME YEARS NOW, Manila has become a favorite stopover for foreign models, particularly pretty young things from Latin America and Eastern Europe, on their way to supposedly bigger modeling assignments elsewhere in the world.

Their participation, albeit in a limited way, is tolerated if not welcomed by fashion insiders for the novelty they bring to a project, be it a runway show, editorial shoot or product commercial.

Due to their strong, dark looks and long, lean bodies, these "imports" are able to give a campaign the much-needed imported cachet without completely alienating the local market like blond, blue-eyed lookers usually do.

"Their look easily translates to the Philippine market," said Pauline Juan, editor in chief of Preview magazine. "Consumers can relate to them on a physical level. They don't find their look too foreign."

And unless there's a way to repeal the law of supply and demand, the need for foreign models is bound to increase in fashion seasons to come.

Expanding market

For one, the market in Manila for print and TV ads continues to expand. Companies are thus always on the lookout for fresh faces, said Melanie Cuevas, editor in chief of Metro magazine. After all, makeup and styling can only do so much to transform an overexposed local endorser's face.

"Advertisers also tend to pick foreign models because they often charge lower talent fees than local models," she added.

In the course of working with foreigners, stylist Millet Arzaga, who still makes it a point to regularly tap promising local talents, discovered more.

"As much as possible, I try to cast Filipino models for editorial shoots," she said. "But since these shoots have small budgets, local models aren't always inclined to accept them."

Since they have everything to gain from such exposures, these "parachute" models are more than willing to take on her offer. That was when Arzaga started to see for herself up close how photogenic, disciplined and dedicated these foreign upstarts were.

"They always arrive at the venue way before call time," she said. "They look good, know their angles and have well-toned bodies. How can you resist using such models?"

If anything, the healthy competition posed by foreigners doubles as a wakeup call for local models to further hone their craft and maintain or even enhance their looks, said Cuevas.

"Although there are plenty of pretty faces out there," she said, "I've observed that some can't really pose or move like models from previous decades."

Juan echoed Cuevas' frustration: "Posing and modeling are harder than they look. I can't tell you how many shoots we've had with local and foreign models, especially the younger ones, where we literally had to dictate every pose to the model."

Global phenomenon

With the advent of the Internet, the influx of foreign models is a global phenomenon not confined to the Philippines. It's not unthinkable for an ambitious and extremely good-looking girl to leave behind her hometown and travel halfway around the world to follow her dream, said Juan.

The Philippines is an ideal regional destination since, unlike most Southeast Asians, most Filipinos speak English, making it easier for foreigners, including Brazilians, to get around.

"Modeling has become so competitive in Brazil that models have to train where they can to make it big there or elsewhere," Juan added.

But how did these beautiful strangers end up here in the first place?

"More often than not," said leading fashion show director Robbie Carmona, "these foreign models are sent here by their mother agencies to try out the Asian market to build their portfolios and gain more experience."

Good business

It also makes for good business sense for local modeling agencies to represent these foreigners in Manila.

"The number of agencies has increased over the years," Cuevas observed. "They usually send scouts abroad to fly in foreign models simply because having a wider stable of talents brings in more business."

It was only in a swimwear show staged by a glossy magazine two months ago, however, when we suddenly noticed how lopsided the situation has become. For the first time ever, foreign models outnumbered the locals.

As if this wasn't enough, a columnist from another paper asked us in hushed tones during the same event if we would support supposed moves to "ban" these foreigners to alleviate the plight of "beleaguered" locals. He said he would.

The irony wasn't lost on us since the guy himself is a foreigner making a living commenting on affairs involving Filipinos. His nationality, however, was beside the point.

Having covered the fashion scene for several years now and seeing how the quality of local models has deteriorated, we declined his invitation.

Rather than ban foreigners, we said, locals should learn to compete on their own merits by honing both their professional and people's skills and taking care of their bodies like everyone else. Doing so comes with the territory.

Working harder

Of course, in an imperfect world, that's easier said than done. Apart from thinking of ways to continuously reinvent themselves, models have to work harder to win over a fickle public's attention and undying preference for anything and everything imported.

Is this development then a mere offshoot of globalization or is it a lingering vestige of Pinoy colonial mentality? Are industry insiders, including the media, merely reacting to it or are they partly to blame for it? Assuming that the exotic aliens are getting more jobs than the locals, what can the former do to change the ratio?

Not surprisingly, insiders share our view on the futility of banning foreigners. In fact, seasoned model Rissa Samson, president of the Professional Models Association of the Philippines, welcomes their presence.

"I have nothing against foreign models in Manila so long as they obtain the proper work permits," she said. "Their presence, in fact, encourages healthy competition and this can only push models to spheres of global excellence."

By virtue of their reputation and extensive industry contacts, established names like her still manage to get booked. She did admit, though, that the foreign invasion could jeopardize the budding careers of local newbies.

"Younger models who seek to penetrate the modeling industry have to unfortunately compete with these foreign models," Samson said.

The prevailing situation, however, is far from being a simple case of colonial mentality on the part of retailers and consumers.

"That kind of argument is so '80s," said Juan. "Retailers nowadays pick their models based on how they want to promote their brands."

Whether they follow the lead of their headquarters abroad or blaze a trail by using a healthy mix of local and foreign celebrities and models like Bench, Penshoppe, SM and the like, these companies are only acting on what works best for their respective brands.

"I don't think the growing preference for foreigners has something to do with colonial mentality," said Ronald Pineda, owner of the local RTW brand, Folded & Hung. "I guess Filipinos just know how to appreciate beauty across all boundaries."

While his brand is known for capitalizing on the image of local movie stars such as Claudine Barretto and Polo Ravales, Pineda has no qualms using nameless foreigners for the occasional fashion show and photo shoot.

Novelty

"Foreign models definitely add novelty to a project and will continue to do so as long as they deliver and do their jobs well," he said.

Actually, while jet-setting models have been flying in and out with routine regularity for decades now in Singapore, Hong Kong and Bangkok, it took a while for Manila to catch on.

This may seem strange to outsiders since fashion is one of the first industries to feel the ripples of globalization (long before such a word was coined). But now that its effects are here to stay, local models have no choice but to adapt or perish. They can either take advantage of the situation or, like dinosaurs that once ruled the earth, fall by the wayside.

"Globalization is a concept not only models but Filipinos in general should embrace," said Carmona. "Balance is key to making this [situation] healthy. Rather than feel discouraged, Filipino models should be inspired to compete and explore other fashion markets."

PMAP has yet to make moves to legally address the issue, but it has already voiced its concern about how a handful of local modeling agencies are reportedly able to bring in foreign models without getting the proper work permits.

Samson even surmised that not a few of these foreigners are below 18 years old and, therefore, require parental consent to work anywhere in the world.

"They come to our country as tourists, but continue to work and earn money without being taxed," she said. "We're wondering if the Bureau of Immigration and Deportation has endorsed their work as models to the Department of Labor and Employment."

Samson said the labor department should impose sanctions on companies that employ minors and foreigners with no work permits.

(To be continued)

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PARK Hae Jin ("As Much as Heaven and Earth") wears Lie Sang Bong.

PARK Eun Hye ("Jewel in the Palace") in Lie Sang Bong

KO JU Won ("The Infamous Chill Sisters") in Resureccion

What South Korea has done to its film and entertainment industry, Seoul now hopes to do with its fashion creations

RYAN of the pop group Paran in Chang Kwang Hyo

DRESS from Lie Sang Bong's S/S 2007 Collection

Stairway to fashion heaven

By Cheche V. Moral

CAN KOREA'S FASHION designers achieve the same level of mass appeal in the region as its now phenomenal pop musicians and drama stars?

For now, only time can tell. But if the Seoul Metropolitan City Government and Seoul Business Agency had their way, that would be the goal.

In the recent Hallyu Star Fashion Festival held in Seoul, some of the country's popular entertainers walked the runways wearing designs by Seoul's top fashion names. It was the first such event held by the city with the specific purpose of promoting Korean fashion not just to the local market but to the entire region as well.

Hallyu, according to Wikipedia, is a term that refers to the Korean wave, or the overwhelming popularity of South Korean pop culture across Asia, following the export of Korean dramas in recent years.

Some observers regard *hallyu* as mere collective branding, a marketing strategy meant to push the by-products of the Korean pop-culture phenomenon: music, dance, food, language, contemporary fashion. To a large extent this is accurate, and, yes, even clever. The fan-aping-the-celebrity, after all, is a tried-and-tested formula in merchandising. (In Seoul, it's not unusual to find boutiques with a gallery of celebrities garbed in items akin to the stores' merchandise.)

What South Korea has done to its film and entertainment industry—said to have one of the largest markets in the world—Seoul now hopes to do with its fashion.

Seoul fashion, in fact, is a $21-billion industry; domestic sales account for half of this figure. Some 40 percent of the companies in the capital, or over 67,000, are fashion-related. The industry enjoys the support of the city government and the SBA. A central information center, called Seoul Fashion Center, was

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CHU Ja Hyun | SON Ho Young | KANG Jung Hwa | LEE Ju Hyun | MEMBERS of the pop girl group Babyvox Re.V also take their place on the Hallyu 2007 runway. | ANDY of Shinhwa

Stairway to fashion heaven

From page D1

in fact set up in 2000 to provide creative consultations to designers, and assist local and foreign buyers.

(South Korea produces its own textiles. In 2005 it was ranked sixth among the world's largest textile exporters.)

Mass market

At Dongdaemun Fashion Town, Seoul's famous shopping area with 37 shopping malls or some 35,000 shops, daily sales are said to exceed $40 million, 80 percent of which are wholesale. The merchandise here is largely mass market, ergo low- to mid-priced. It's just the place where tourists can get a taste and feel of that distinct Korean street fashion, no different from those they see on the backs of their *hallyu* idols. Most shops are open till the wee hours.

Areas like Myungdong offer familiar global brands and are favored by the young crowd. Cheongdam-dong is home to foreign designer shops.

Seoul's top designers have boutiques in the upscale district called Kang Nam (also known as Gang Nam).

Designer Han Seung Soo, a hip-looking man in his 40s who described his aesthetic as "city bohemian," said his style appeals to the artistic types, an exclusive few who want something unique. A former dancer, Han created the costumes in the opera version of the TV drama "Winter Sonata" staged in Japan.

Even for designers like Han who enjoy relative success with their niche markets—Han's pieces cost from $200-$2,500—the popularity of foreign designer labels in Korea remains a burden.

But others who have conquered foreign markets, opening shops in major fashion cities like Paris, said their core markets remain Korean.

Lie Sang Bong, who opened his store in the French capital 10 years ago, said his main business remains in Korea, where he has 17 outlets. Lie also has stockists in New York, Moscow and the Middle East.

FOR ASIAN designers to be taken seriously by a foreign market, "imitation is a no-no," says Lie Sang Bong.

CHO Sung Kyung with framed photo of the red dress she made for "Lovers in Paris"

CHECHE MORAL

HAN Seung Soo says his goal is to encourage Korean men to dress more casually.

Another Korean talent who has conquered Paris is Cho Sung Kyung, who's credited for the costume in the ballroom scene in the popular drama "Lovers in Paris." Cho's Latulle label produces classic romantic designs and is favored by celebrities for red-carpet events. In her chic atelier cum café in Kang Nam, Cho also has displays of her bridal wear from her other label called Swan by Latulle.

Apart from Paris, Cho also sells her clothes in Hong Kong, Los Angeles and Tokyo.

Lie has been designing clothes for the past 28 years. His look is modern and sophisticated, but he likes to incorporate elements from his provenance into his designs. His love for calligraphy, for instance, is evident in his current collection, which uses fabrics with stylized prints of the Korean alphabet.

It's one's unique identity, according to Lie, that makes the international market take notice of Asian design. He dismissed any suggestion that the Japanese presence in Paris may have made it easier for him to penetrate the European fashion scene. (Japanese designers Hanae Mori, Yohji Yamamoto, Rei Kawakubo, Kenzo and Issey Miyake broke into the world's fashion capital some 20 odd years ago.)

"It was easier for them during the '80s," Lie said through his translator.

Four-hour show

At the Hallyu Star Fashion Festival, Lie, Han and Cho were among the 31 Seoul designers who presented their clothes in the nearly four-hour fashion show-cum-concert held at Seoul Plaza.

Pop acts like Paran, Babyvox, SG Wannabe, psy, Kim Hyun Jeong, Bada, Andy and Son Ho Young presented musical performances at intervals of the three-part fashion show.

The clothes were worn by some of Seoul's top and up-and-coming actors and actresses, some of whom are starring in dramas currently airing on Korean channels on Philippine cable: Park Hae Jin, Ko Ju Won, Lee Ju Hyun, Park Eun Hye, Kang Jung Hwa, Lee Yun Mi and Chu Ja Hyun.

LEE Yun Mi and Joo Young Hoon in Cho Sung Kyung designs

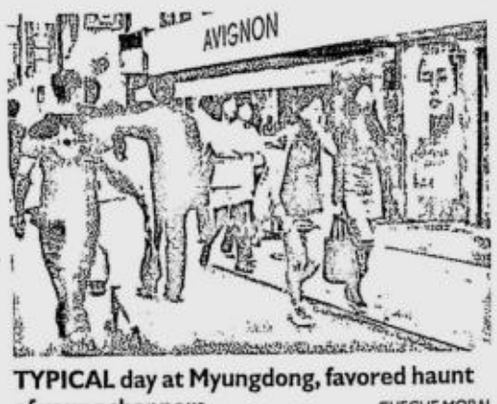
BADA in an outfit by Rubina

SINGER Kim Hyun Jeong

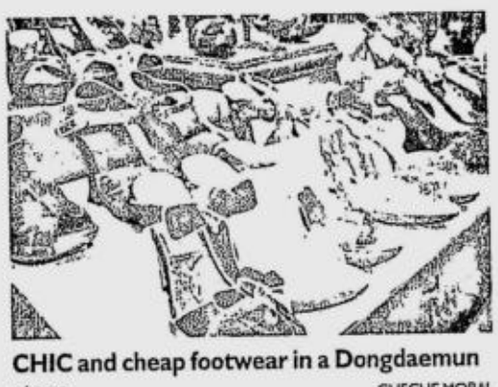
A HAT shop in Insadong displays a gallery of celebrities wearing headgear akin to the store's designs. CHECHE MORAL

K-POP and K-fashion extravaganza at the first Hallyu Star Fashion Festival in Seoul

INSADONG is home to art galleries and stores selling Korean souvenirs and antiques.



TYPICAL day at Myungdong, favored haunt of young shoppers CHECHE MORAL



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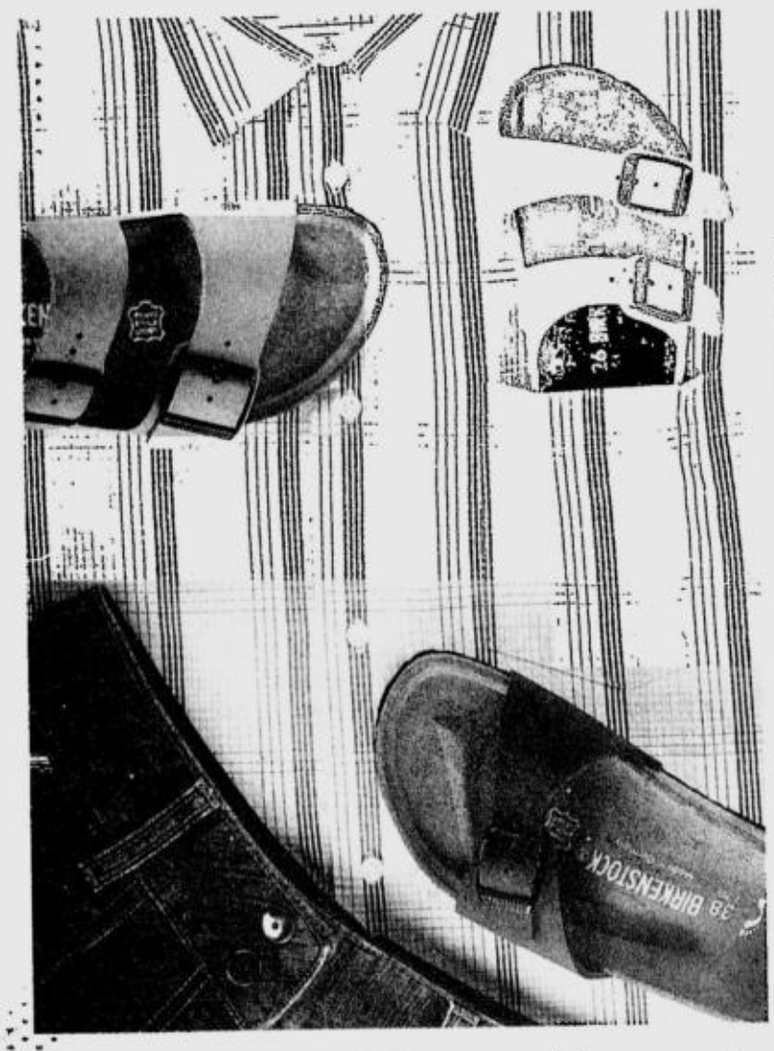

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WHAT DO SUPERMODEL HEIDI Klum and superchef Jamie Oliver have in common? Both believe in Birkenstock comfort and quality. Klum, host of "Project Runway," has launched her own Birkenstock line with a recent collaboration called Oriental Dreams. While Oliver, for several years now, has teamed up with Birkenstock in outfitting the promising cooks of his Fifteen Foundation with Profi-Birkis.

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In the Philippines, the first exclusive Birkenstock boutique, opens in June at 3/F, New Ayala TriNoma Mall, Quezon City.

New look for society rag

EDIPRESSE ASIA HAS redesigned Philippine Tatler along with all 10 members of the Asia Tatler series, in collaboration with international design duo Maryjane Fahey and Mariana Ochs.

"We have just completed a comprehensive redesign project. We set out to improve not only the look of the magazine, but also the way it's organized," said Edipresse Asia CEO and Publisher, Barrie C. Goodridge.

Building on the elegance traditionally associated with Philippine Tatler, Fahey and Ochs have improved the navigation of the magazine to make it easier to read. Overall, the readership experience has been enhanced by a new rhythm to pages and more fluidity in the layouts, according to Goodridge.

"We have introduced new styles of photography to our pages, from beautiful portraiture to exotic fashion shoots, from atmospheric reportage to artistic still life images—Philippine Tatler's world in all its vibrancy."

The comprehensive redesign has included the vital design detail of new letter fonts that have been created exclusively for Philippine Tatler. These enhance expanded departments within the magazine, including Philippine Tatler's signature Tittle Tattle section, to give readers a better overview of the social month ahead, and a new section, Concierge, which—like its namesake—gives the insider track on luxury services. Philippine Tatler's Style section also includes a new page, Style File, focusing every month on a trendsetter in society.

In the June issue, the People section includes an interview with Paloma Picasso, the jewellery designer daughter of Pablo Picasso. The redesign is perhaps most expressive in the features, which include a stunning African safari story, Into the Wild, and Philippine Tatler's exclusive profile of Margie Moran Floirendo.

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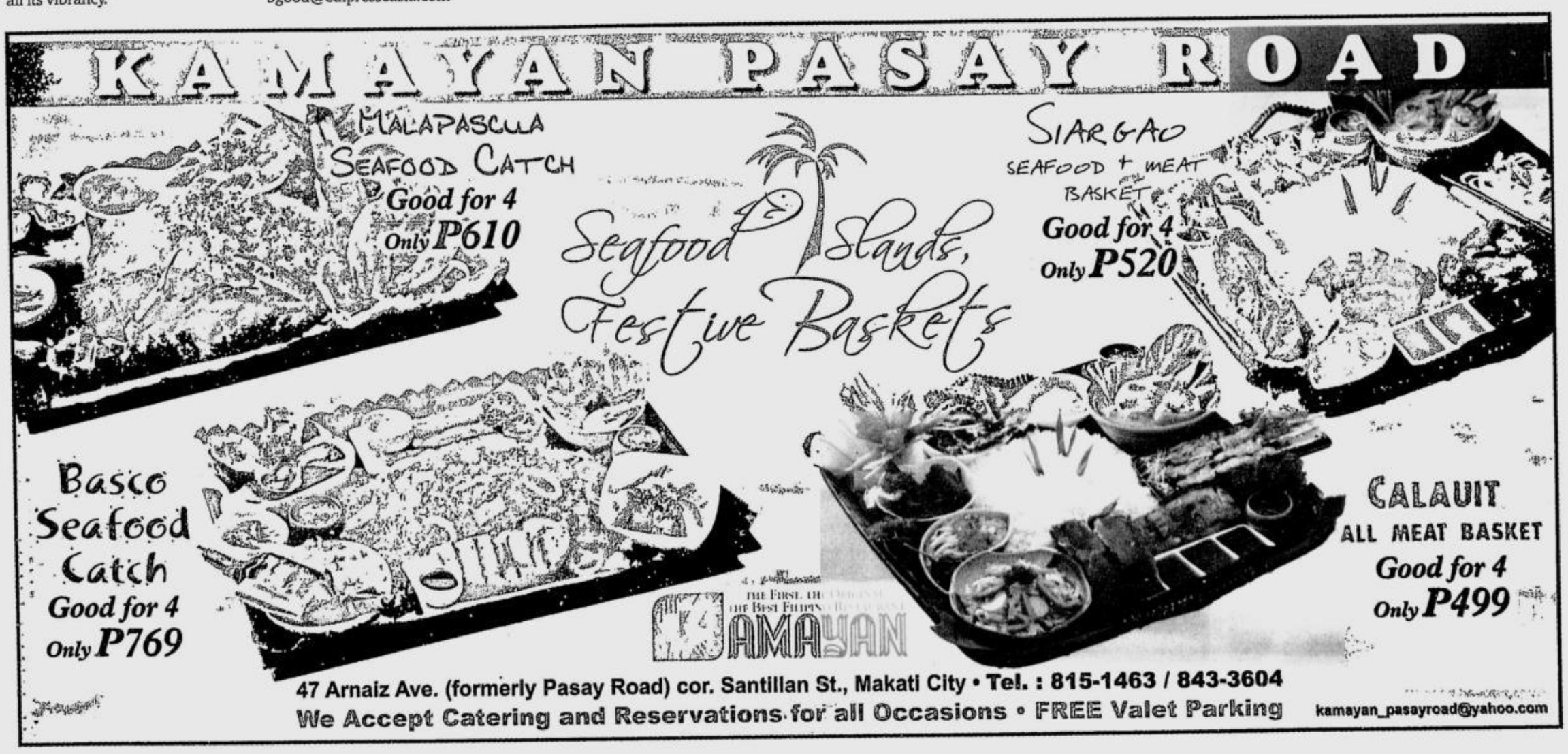
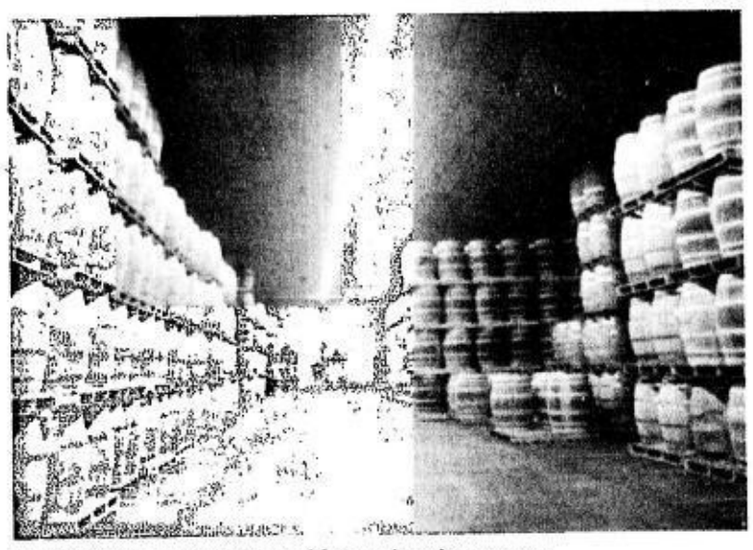
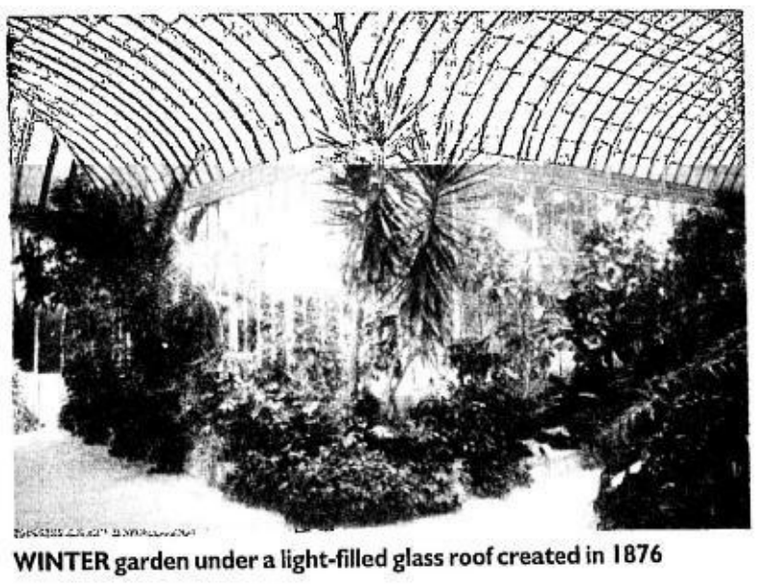
sense and simplicity




AWESOME oak barrels used for ageing the cognac


WINTER garden under a light-filled glass roof created in 1876

BEAUTIFUL manicured garden

Brandy-dazed in Cognac, France

WE EXPERIENCED DEFINITELY the lifestyle of the fabulous Moët & Chandon, dahlings, when we visited the champagne district of Epernay. We then zoomed backed to Paris for a day of fantastic lunch, dinner and shopping, *naturellement*. The following day, we moved on to the Cognac region to discover Hennessy. There we learned the process of making the highest form of brandy known as "cognac."

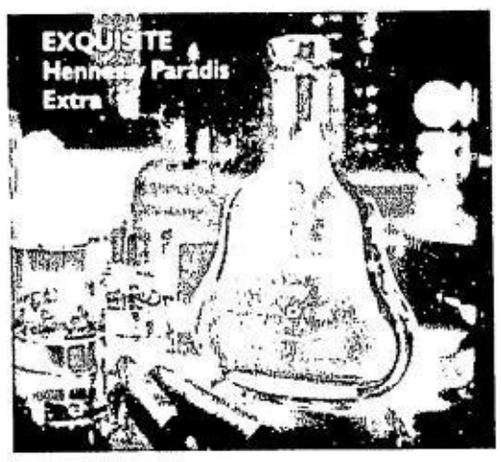
From Paris Montparnasse, we took a comfortable TGV train to Angouleme, where we were welcomed by the super *tres charmant* **Cyrille Gautier Auriol**, international training and promotion manager of Hennessy, and tall eye-catcher **Tatiana Troubetzkoy**, the brand's international press officer.

We had lunch in Angouleme's five-star seafood resto where **Pepper Teehankee** and *moi* competed on who could slurp the most oysters. Well, *moi* won, *palanggas*, while downing the refreshing Hennessy Cognac with ice.

After a two-hour drive, we arrived in the town called Cognac. We proceeded to the vineyards and the awesome distillery of Le Peu Hennessy, where the world's leading cognac is made.

Monsieur Cyrille Gautier Auriol showed to us the *terroir* of the cognac area they referred to as the Grande Champagne. It turns out Cognac was subdivided into six areas with the four key areas contributing to the complexity of cognac, where the hectare had to be strictly controlled so as to adhere to the quality standards of cognac.

The cognac selection is very much different from the other brandy brands whose producers buy excess grape productions or excess wines from different areas as raw material. One thing that we all have to learn is "you simply cannot make good wines from bad grapes and the imperfection of the wine will be magnified more when you turn it into brandy," according to our hosts.



Carefully controlled

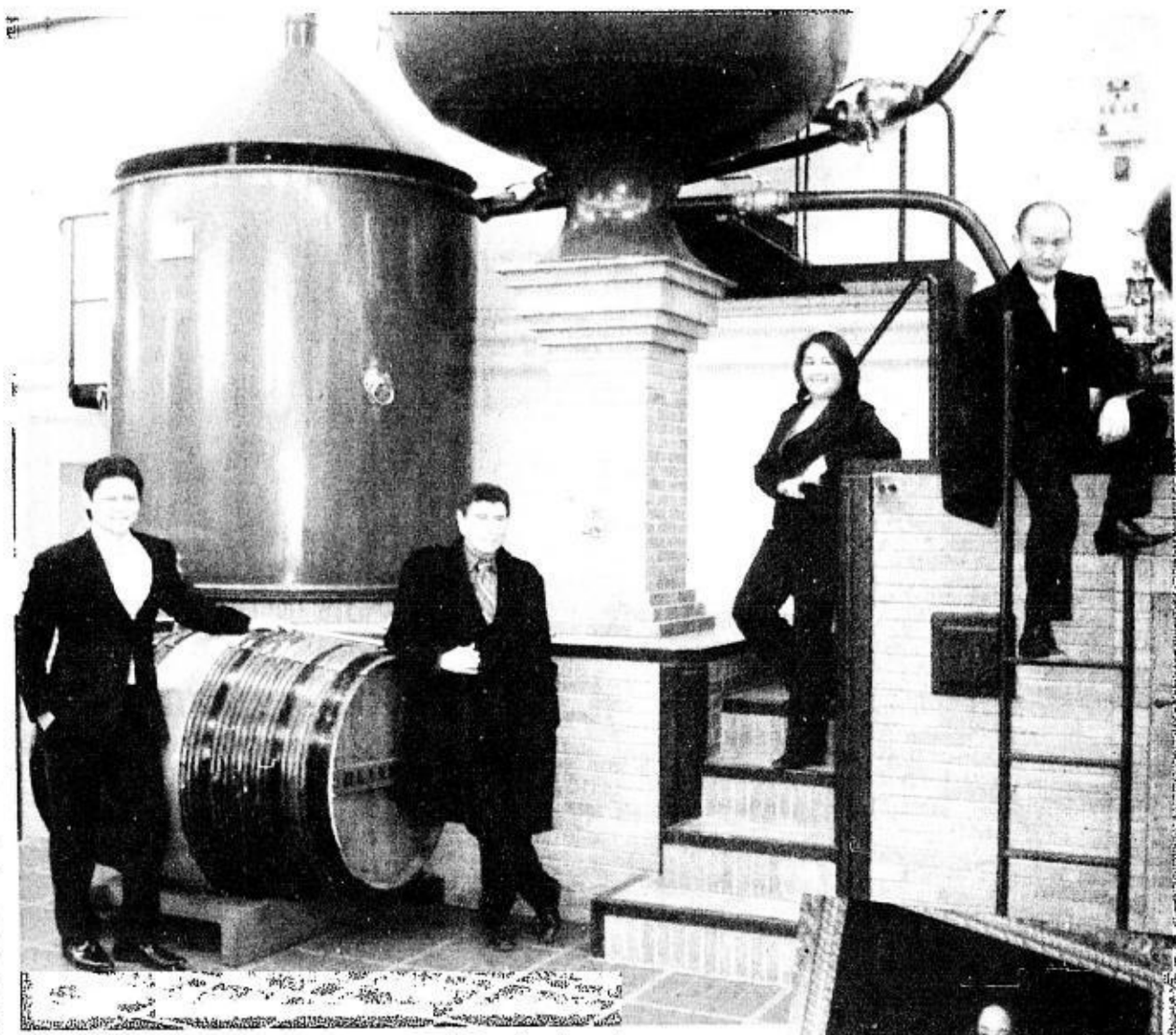
In Cognac, the grape variety is typically *ugni blanc* and, although it makes for a slightly acidic wine, it's perfect for transformation into cognac. Each process is carefully controlled so that the wines to be produced should be just what Hennessy requires, dahlings.

After the wine production, the wine is then distilled. Distillation is the process of boiling the wines and collecting the vapors. In Hennessy, however, it is not as simple as collecting the vapors. Unlike other spirits that will be more in the business of producing alcohol, Hennessy actually collects the aromas. Its double distillation process over at Distillery Le Peu actually aims only at the very essence of the wines.

As the distillation continues, the very essence of the wine is captured, and this is what they refer to as the heart.

The next result is the very light and more watery evaporation called the tails. Then more distillation takes place, and the result is what they term as *eau-de-vie* (the water of life). It actually takes nine liters of wine to produce a liter of Hennessy cognac.

This explains the high price of quality Hennessy, which is actually like drinking the essences of a case of wine, would you believe!


PHILIPPINE Tatler's Anton San Diego, PDI's Maurice Arcache, Hennessy chief representative Olga Azarcon and Star's Pepper Teehankee

MONSIEUR Cyrille Gautier Auriol showing us the grapes of the Hennessy vineyard

Tasting committee

Instead of just leaving the *eau-de-vie* to age in the barrels, Hennessy has a super world-class tasting committee, which samples each cask to assess if it can further mature, or if it has already reached its peak maturity and be ready for blending.

The master blender is **Yann Filloux**, who is the seventh-generation master blender in the Hennessy history. This is something unique to Hennessy as the master blender shares his ancestry with Hennessy history.

The Filloux *famille* has worked with Hennessy since 1800, an ongoing partnership that is over two centuries old.

A cellar master learns from his father, his nose steeped in cognac from childhood. This is not something you can learn in a few years, dahlings. This is something that the Fillouxs have dedicated their lives to so that the world can enjoy the same Hennessy that the elegant aristocrats and royalties enjoyed when it was first blended.

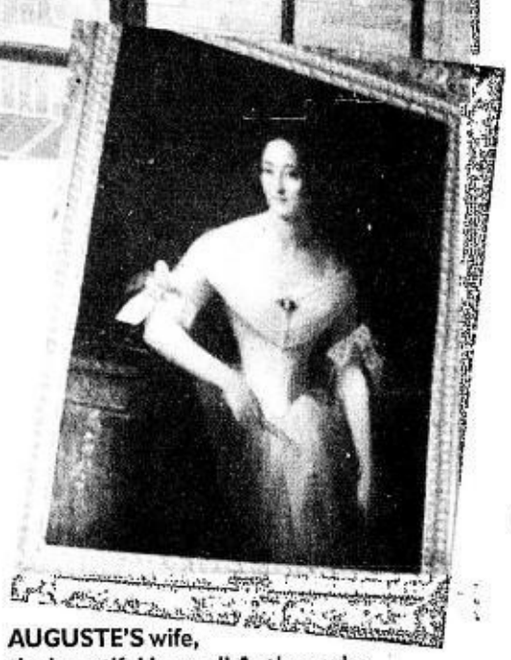
Our delightful host, the ever watchful chief representative **Olga Azarcon**, guided us through the tasting session with the tall, super-dashing and articulate **Laurent Lozano.**

It was definitely an experience as Monsieur Lozano taught us the art of blending. We were given three cognacs from different vineyards and different vintages (1973, 1975 and 1986) to blend. Each cognac had its own taste profile and it was up to us to blend to our own preference.

It was so easy actually, as we blended only three cognacs; but imagine blending more than 30 cognacs to create the awesome high-price Hennessy X.O.! Then there is the Hennessy's Paradis and Richard with more than 100 cognacs to blend.

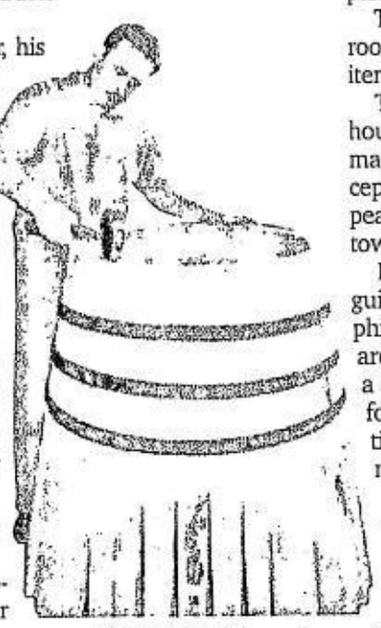
Suddenly, I thought aloud: Hey! Luxury does not seem so easy after all. So *moi* left the cognac assemblage to the super experts and just simply enjoyed that glass of Hennessy.

We also met brilliant and young **Manfred Chen**, the business development manager for Asia, Japan and global travel retail, who explained Hennessy's latest wines and spirits data, showing that the total market share of Hennessy cognac, which is 43 percent, is more than the volume of the next three competitors combined.


AUGUSTE'S wife, the beautiful Irene d' Anthes, who died at the young age of 36

TASTING the 1900 cognac reserve

TUTORED tasting with Monsieur Laurent Lozano, director of research and promotion


MAKING of the oak barrel by top experienced artisans

WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH

Maurice Arcache

Photos by **Alex Van Hagen** using **Kodak** EasyShare system

Chateau de Bagnolet

We then went to another fabulous chateau. The Chateau de Bagnolet is impressive; it has luscious gardens all over with the house casting a timeless, romantic, aristocratic ambience, dahlings. It is part of the more than 200-hectare property of Hennessy that is bordered by the Charente river, for the most elegant dinner and overnight stay.

The Chateau was lined with gorgeous prints and cloth-covered walls, reminiscent of the French aristocratic way of life. Each single detail of the luxury chateau ensured that we would be pampered with only the best!

To our delight, our *salle de bain* (as in, both rooms) was filled with all sorts of Christian Dior items, no less, for both men and women.

The Chateau is a super-elegant 19th century house purchased by **Auguste Hennessy** as his main residence in 1840. It is a magical and exceptional site that forms a romantic haven of peace near the tranquil river located close to the town of Cognac.

Here, dahlings, the art of entertaining is a guiding principle; one could even call it a certain philosophy of life. All the aspects of good living are brought together. The talented chef creates a subtle and inventive cuisine, serving delicate food that blends the different flavors to perfection; as well as excellent wines, super rare cognacs, and carefully selected cigars.

Bright and early the next morning, we went to the Hennessy Cooperage site in La Sarrazine. The town of Cognac is home to 60 percent of all French coopers and well-known for the quality of the cask produced there. No cognac would exist without oak wood! Without wood, neither maturing nor ageing would be possible. It is therefore important for Hennessy to entrust responsibility for ensuring the irreproachable quality of its casks to highly experienced artisans.

Later on we had the pleasure of being toured by the witty Cyrille Gautier Auriol to the Founder's Cellar that housed the Hennessy *eau-de-vie* back in the 1800s. This is another specialty to Hennessy as its rare collection of *eau-de-vie* is used for such blends as Hennessy Richard and Hennessy Paradis. Both are blends of more than 100 *eau-de-vie* which have been aged for more than a century.

It was an exquisite experience to savor the piece de resistance, 100-year-old Paradis, subtly bursting with its waves of spicy and floral notes. Exactly the paradise my palate had been hoping to discover all these years.

Back to Paris

Then it was time to rush back to Paris for a fabulous dinner hosted by the irreplaceable woman of substance and style, **Vicki Belo**, of the world-class Belo Clinic, for 16 of her pals, with the help of **Babette Aquino Benoit**, at the chi-chi restaurant L'Etoile. But that's another story sooner than soon, dahlings.

Brief history of Hennessy: It is one of the oldest and most famous manufacturers of cognac, a type of French distilled wine, or brandy. The company was born when the Irishman **Richard Hennessy**, who was a mercenary for the French king and was later compensated with land in the town of Cognac in France in 1765, started a trading business, initially sending liquor back to his Irish friends and relatives. His son, **James Hennessy**, expanded the business into the brandy production with which the town is now synonymous.

The business was renamed James (or Jacques) Hennessy and Co.—a name the company retains today. The company has been managed by successive generations of Hennessys (now on their eighth generation).

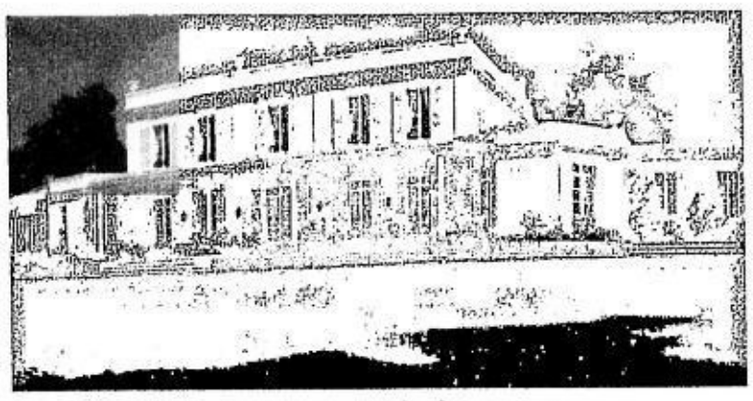
Ownership has changed over the years though. In 1971, Hennessy merged Moët et Chandon. In 1987, the drinks group then merged with fashion house Louis Vuitton to create what is now the world's largest luxury goods conglomerate, LVMH.

Hennessy currently sells about three million awesome cases of cognac each year.

Remember, Hennessy above all is a promise. A promise of pleasure, of encounters, of privileged shared moments.

Hey, anyone for the bubbly Moët & Chandon or Hennessy on the rocks? Well, I'll take both, *mes cheris* (as in, my dahlings).

WITH Laure Paugam (second from left) and Tatiana Troubetzkoy


CHATEAU de Bagnolet's impressive back entrance

HENNESSY'S 1800 aging reserves

Programs for special children for 2007-2008

ENROLLMENT IS ONGOING until June 30 at Cupertino Center for Special Children, the nonstock, nonprofit day school run by the Foundation for Retarded Children, Inc. Established in 1965, Cupertino is dedicated to serve children, adolescents and adults with special needs. It provides educational, therapeutic and lifetime skills not available in regular schools and clinics. Cupertino is duly accredited by the Department of Education and has the status of a special-education elementary school. Admission age is 4-14 years. The school also offers pre-vocational courses to give students skills that will enable them to be productive and even get jobs. On-the-job training in office work, cooking, laundry and other skills is provided. Admission age for these programs is 15-20 years. Fax 9284115.

LECTURE. The Wellness Institute will conduct a lecture-workshop on how meditation can help overcome depression 1-5 p.m., June 9, at the institute's conference room, Escriva Street, behind the University of Asia and the Pacific in Ortigas. Dr. Ibarra M. Gonzalez will conduct the lecture-workshop, which is part of the program of the Natasha Goulbourn Foundation. He will discuss common causes of depression, principles and techniques for effective meditation. He will also conduct various meditation exercises. Call 6317794, 6370497 or 0918-9337577.

DIGITAL WEB DESIGN COURSE. A two-day course hands-on seminar which includes computer lab application, free software and computer-based design exercises will be held June 29-30, at 1503A West Tower, Philippine Stock Exchange, Ortigas, Pasig. Call 6874445, 6873415, 6874645; or visit www.businessmaker-academy.com.

SEMINAR. Businessmaker Academy will help participants understand basic accounting terms, manage cash flow and read financial statements by offering the following workshops: Accounting for Non-Accountants, June 9, and Taxation for Individuals and Corporations, June 30. The seminar will be held at 1503A West Tower, Philippine Stock Exchange, Ortigas, Pasig. Call 6874445, 6873415, 6874645 or visit www.businessmaker-academy.com.

SEMINAR. CFS Creative Training and Management will hold the following seminars: "Leadership Skills (Effective People Management), July 20, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.; "Effective Business Communication (Writing, Speaking & Presentation Skills), July 25-26; "Purchasing Management," July 25, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.; "Effective Business Correspondence," July 27, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Call 8697960, 8232358, 8234825.

GOINGS ON

DINNER for Japanese media in Cebu. Department of Tourism Team Japan head Benito C. Bengzon Jr. (center, second row) takes representatives of the Japanese media on a familiarization tour of Cebu. The visit included dinner at a seafood restaurant. The media tour is part of the DOT's ongoing marketing campaign that promotes new Philippine attractions in the Japanese market.

Exclusive sample sale

TOGETHER WITH GRUPO LA Copa, an upcoming specialty boutique, Globe Platinum recently held an exclusive Sample Sale that brought in the most exclusive fashion brands and designer labels, many of them still not locally available.

These were put on display at the Rockwell Tent and were on sale for up to 70-percent off of their original price. The one-of-a-kind and hard-to-find original pieces were complemented by the presence of personal stylists and fitting-room assistants who helped shoppers find the right pieces for them.

Offering premium deals and great bargains is only a small way by which Globe Platinum rewards its loyal customers. Other indulgences include free use of roaming handsets, free pick-up and delivery of handsets for repair, free emergency handset use, up to seven Globe Handyphone lines, privileges at the Hub, spare emergency SIM card, a 24-hour dedicated hotline, invites to private events and special merchant-based discounts.

Call 7301000.

LA COPA'S Juliet Contreras, Chie Arao, Diana Tan, Melanie Go, Dianne Tan, Regina Sambalido and Globe Platinum's Cynthia Mangahas and Coco Domingo

LA COPA'S Isabelle dela Cruz with a Globe Platinum subscriber

DIANA Sadie and Bambi Hernandez

FASHION by La Copa

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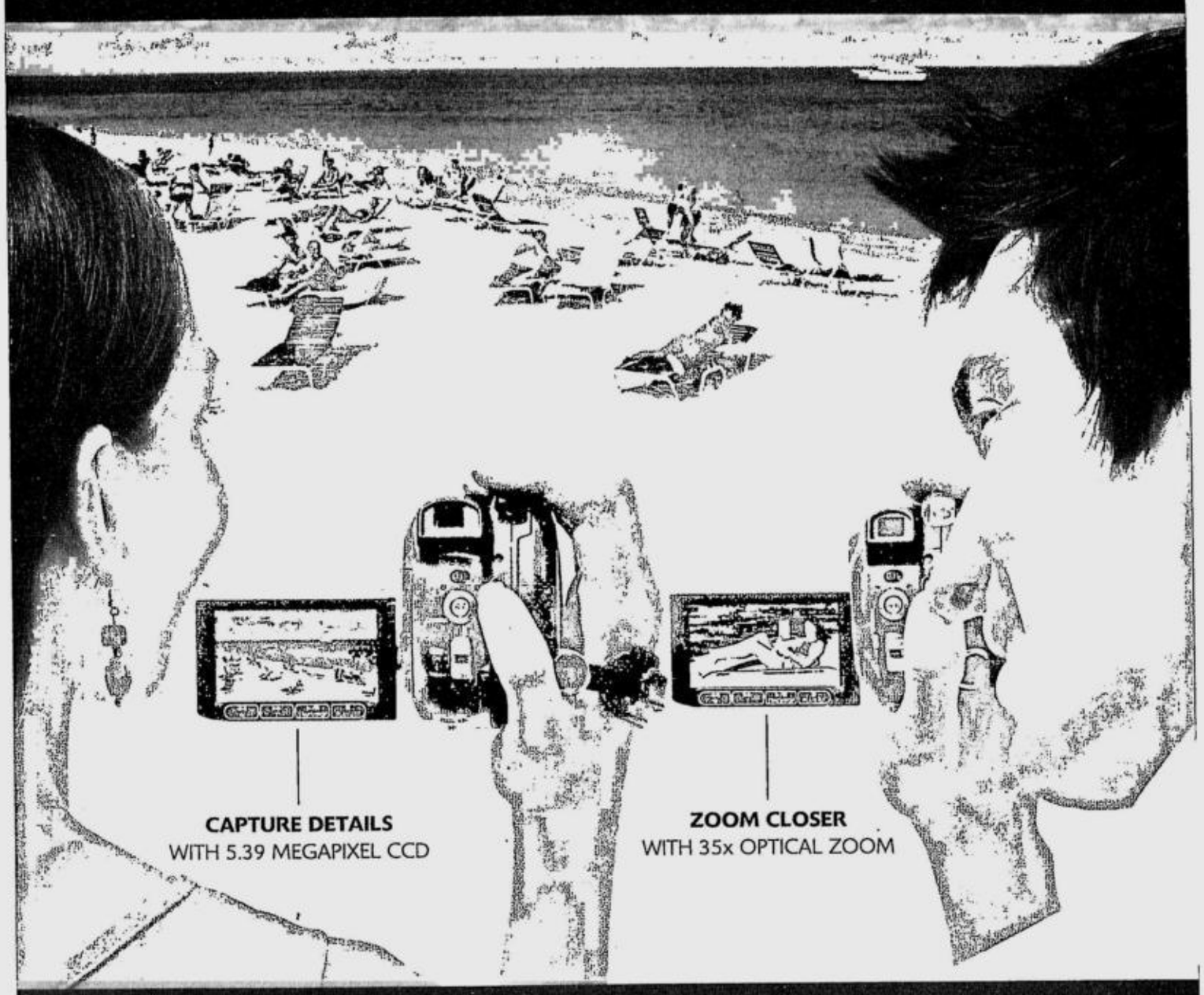

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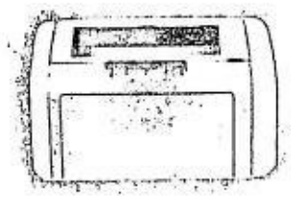

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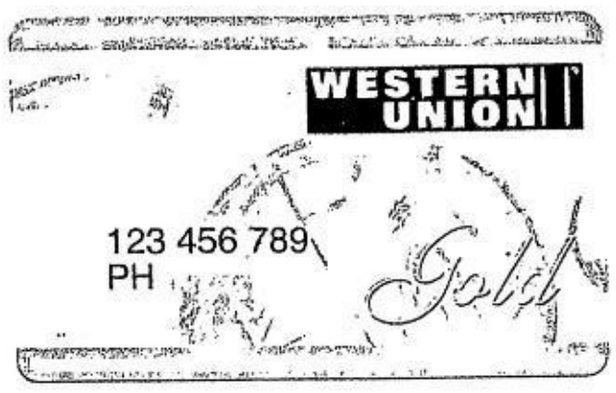

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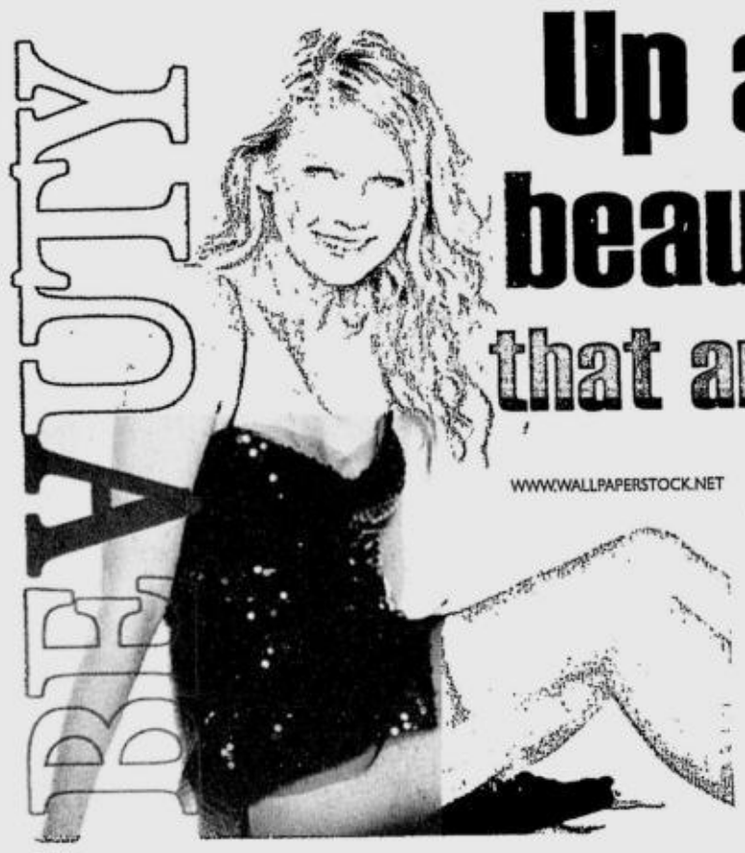
BEAUTY

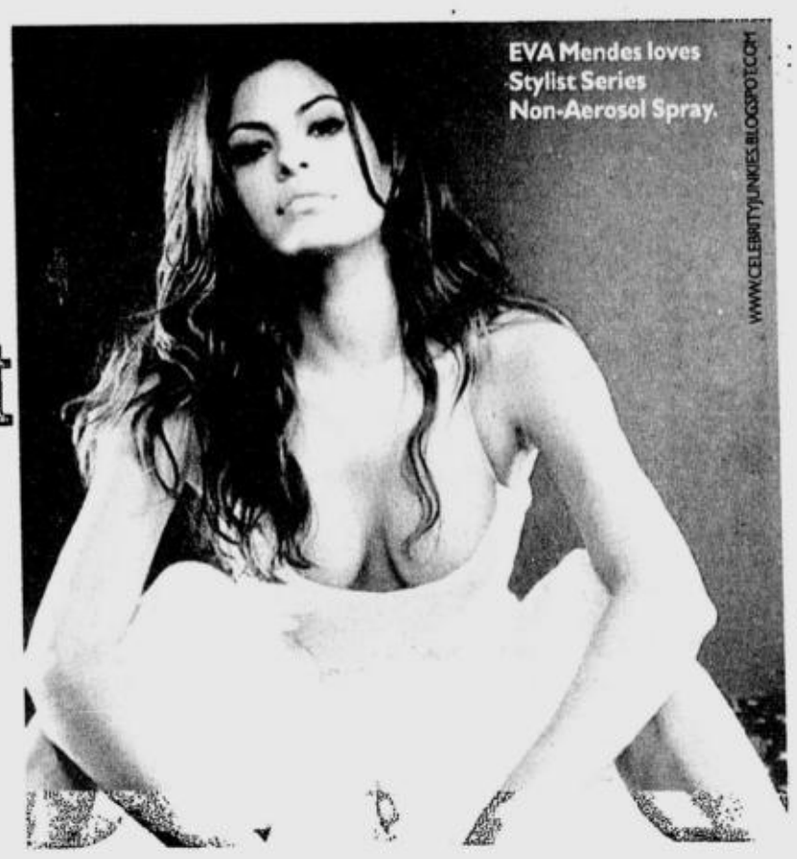
Up and coming beauty products that are worth the wait



WWW.WALLPAPERSTOCK.NET

KIRSTEN Dunst loves Amino Acid Shampoo, Extra Strength Conditioning Rinse with Added Coconut, Ultra Facial Moisturizer, Soothing Gel Masque.

Since Kiehl's is now in Manila, all I have to do to get my Lip Balm #1 is hop on a car and go to Greenbelt 5



EVA Mendes loves Stylist Series Non-Aerosol Spray.

WWW.CELEBRITYJUNKIES.BLOGSPOT.COM

KIEHL'S IS IN MANILA! NOW I don't have to order Lip Balm #1 through friends leaving for the US or Hong Kong.

I believe I'm a pretty giving person, but when friends ask if I have balm and I know I have brought my Kiehl's Lip Balm #1 with me, it takes longer for me to pull it out and I even watch how much they get out of the tube.

Ria Francisco-Prieto`

It sounds so sad and I'm not proud of it, but that's all in the past now since Kiehl's is here! All I have to do now to get my fave tube is hop on a car and go to Greenbelt 5.

Kiehl's was founded as an old-world apothecary in New York's East Village over 150 years ago. Its unique and extensive background represents a blend of cosmetic pharmaceuticals, herbal and medicinal knowledge developed through generations.

It actually started as a full-service pharmacy but has dedicated itself to making quality products for skin and hair care formulation.

My Kiehl's faves include:

Lip Balm #1. When you spread it on your lips, you can actually "feel the love." At least that's how a friend and I describe it. Even boys make a beeline for this wonder tube.

The balm is made of Aqualene, Sweet Almond Oil, Allantoin and Vitamin E. It also contains Aloe Vera, wheat germ oil and Vitamin A, which create soft supple lips all year round. Size: 15ml tube/jar P450.

Creme de Corps is a super-enriched, nourishing treatment with a creamy, buttery texture meant for drier skin. It spreads on easy and doesn't have that sticky feeling. This all-over body moisturizer contains beta-carotene combined with Aloe Vera, Squalene, Vitamin A and E, and vegetable oils to soothe and moisturize skin. Size: 125ml, P1,100; and 250ml, P1,750.

UP AND COMING/ E2

MARY Kate Olsen loves Dermatologist Solutions Overnight. WWW.ALLPOSTERS.COM

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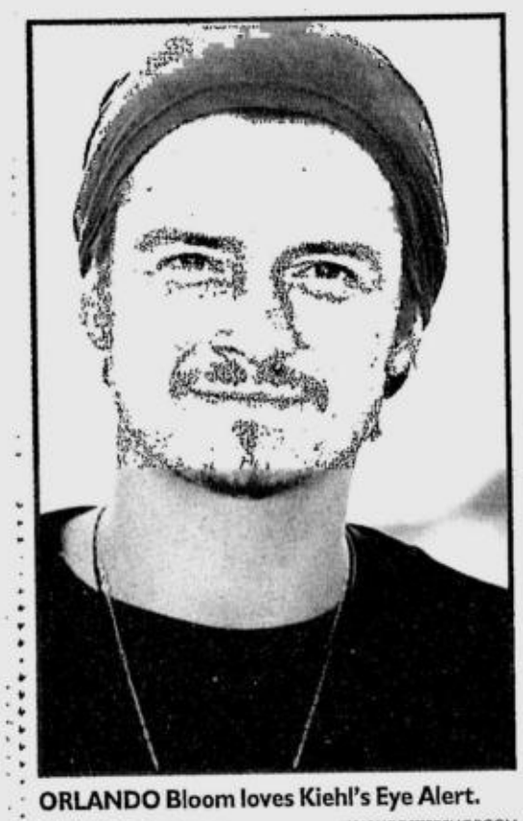
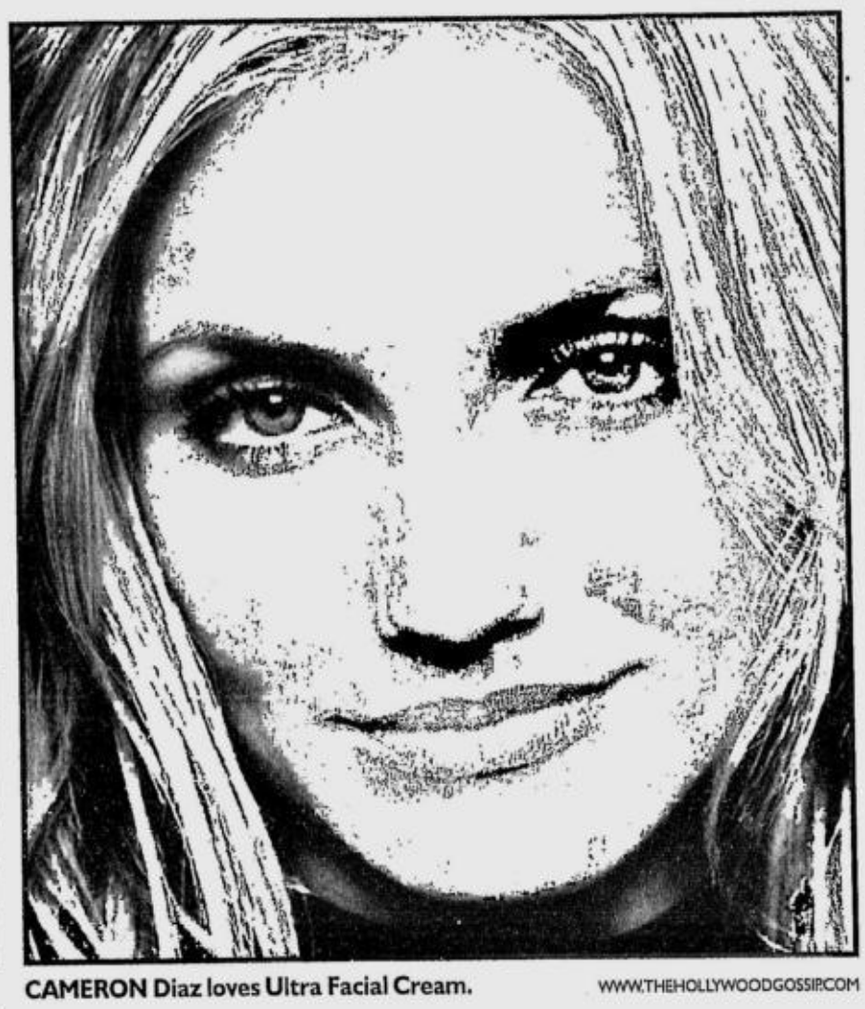
Our fave stars love this star brand, too...



ORLANDO Bloom loves Kiehl's Eye Alert.
WWW.POSTERSHOP.COM

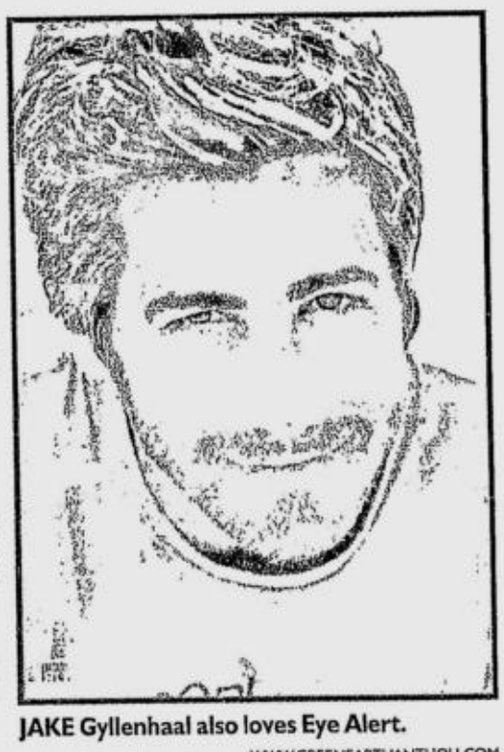


CAMERON Diaz loves Ultra Facial Cream.
WWW.THEHOLLYWOODGOSSIP.COM

DEMI Moore loves Kiehl's lip glosses. WWW.LASTTHEPLACE.COM

MISCHA Barton loves Liquid Body Cleanser Alpin Herbs, Tea Tree Oil Toner, Blue Astringent Herbal Lotion, Cryste Marine Firming Cream.

WWW.WEBWOMBAT.COM



JAKE Gyllenhaal also loves Eye Alert.
WWW.GREENEARTHANTHOU.COM

Up and coming beauty products that are worth the wait

From page E1

Amino Acid Shampoo is a blend of two amino acid cleansers with pure coconut oil cleanser to create a gentle, creamy lather shampoo. What I love about this product is that it is not harsh on my hair; some shampoos are just too strong and end up drying my hair.

Also, because the Amino Acid Shampoo is formulated for colored or treated hair and dry scalp, it's the best product to try when I feel my hair needs some TLC. Size: 125ml, P750; and 250ml, P1,350.

· **Ultra Facial Moisturizer** has a significant amount of Squalene, an emollient derived from oils that are delivered from avocados, apricot kernels and sweet almond. Use it before applying makeup for great results. Even better, it can also be used by men. I make my husband use the one with the SPF when he's out playing golf. Without sunscreen: 75ml, P900; and 125ml, P1,500. With SPF: 75ml, P1,050; and 125ml, P1,795.

Hold on, beauty junkies. Don't get too excited just yet! Kiehl's wont open until October.

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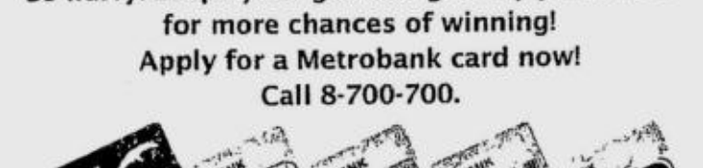

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Hair-raising night

TOP HAIRDRESSERS COMPETED IN THE Philippine Hairdressing Awards (PHA) recently at the RCBC Plaza.

Presented by Schwarzkopf Professional, the event gathered the country's best hairdressers who had passed a pre-judging phase. The panel of judges was composed of designers and beauty experts Fanny Serrano, Vicky Sumbillo, Stefan Wilczynski and Frederick Peralta, and photojournalist Bobot Meru.

Phoemela Barranda hosted the awards night.

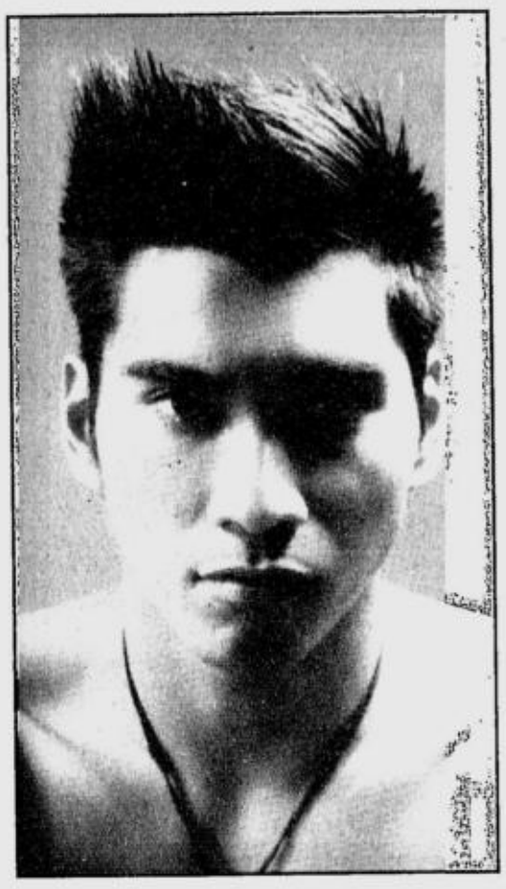
The night's big winner was Indigo Salon's Bong Aparente who bagged the Philippine Hairdresser of the Year Award, for his winning entry in the Avant Garde Category. Aparente's creation was a striking fusion of style and colors. For winning the grand prize, he earned the right to represent the Philippines in the Asia Hairdressing Awards.

The winners in the other categories were Ody Coronel, Harry Acuña and Aparente of Indigo Salon (Team of the Year); R2 Tolentino of Huelgas Hairdressing (Men's Style); Marlon Tantiado of Fix Bench Salon–Ermita (Commercial Style); and Jay Ramos of Indigo Salon (Newcomer of the Year).

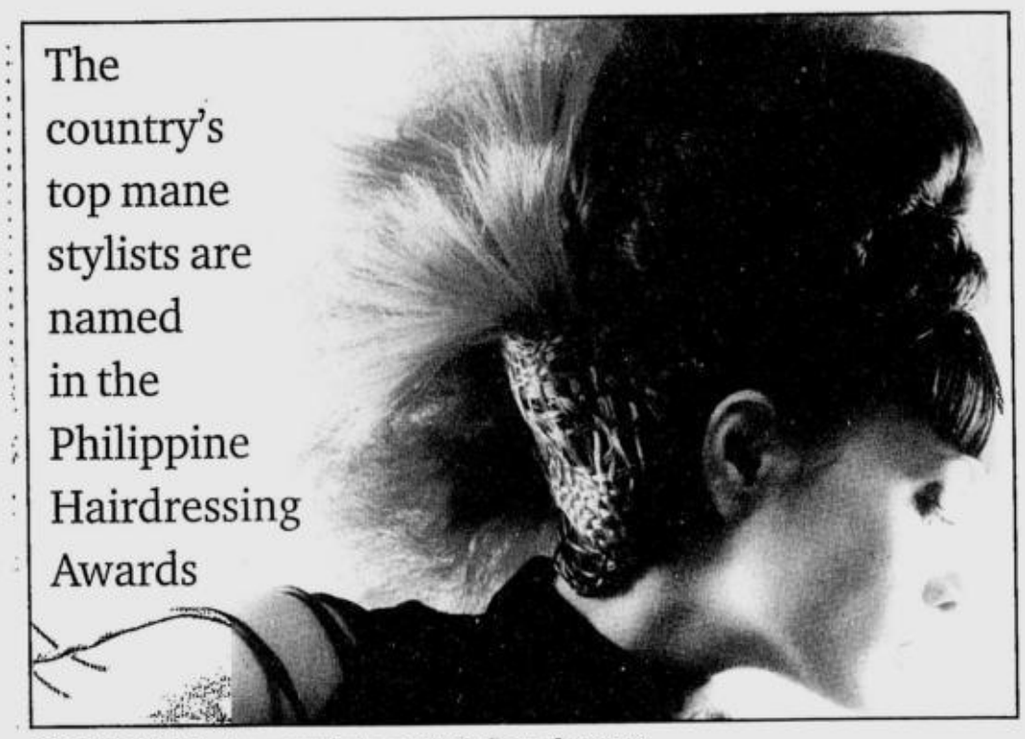
Launched during the finals were the Schwarzkopf Essential Looks, a high fashion-based collection of four trend-setting hairstyles, cuts and colors called the Schwarzkopf Individuality–The Diverse Collection, for Spring-Summer 2007. The four looks were Futurism, Siren, 2-Tone and The Dancer.

Another highlight was the hair-cutting and styling demonstration by Schwarzkopf regional ambassador Somsak Chalachol of Thailand. Schwarzkopf's Philippine ambassadors Nikki Bacay (Traffic Salon), Lorna Sandoval (David's Salon) and Weng de Guzman (Fix Bench Salon) also showcased their own takes on the 2007 trends.

Major sponsors of this year's PHA were Michelle V. Lim Creations for Sari Sari Store in Greenhills and Ermita, Academy of Beauty and Arts, Beauty Bar, Elianto and designers Jerome Salaya-Ang and Cecilio Abad.



MEN'S CATEGORY winning entry by R2 Tolentino (Huelgas Hairdressing)



AVANT-GARDE category winning entry by Bong Aparente

Whoever. Wherever. Whatever.

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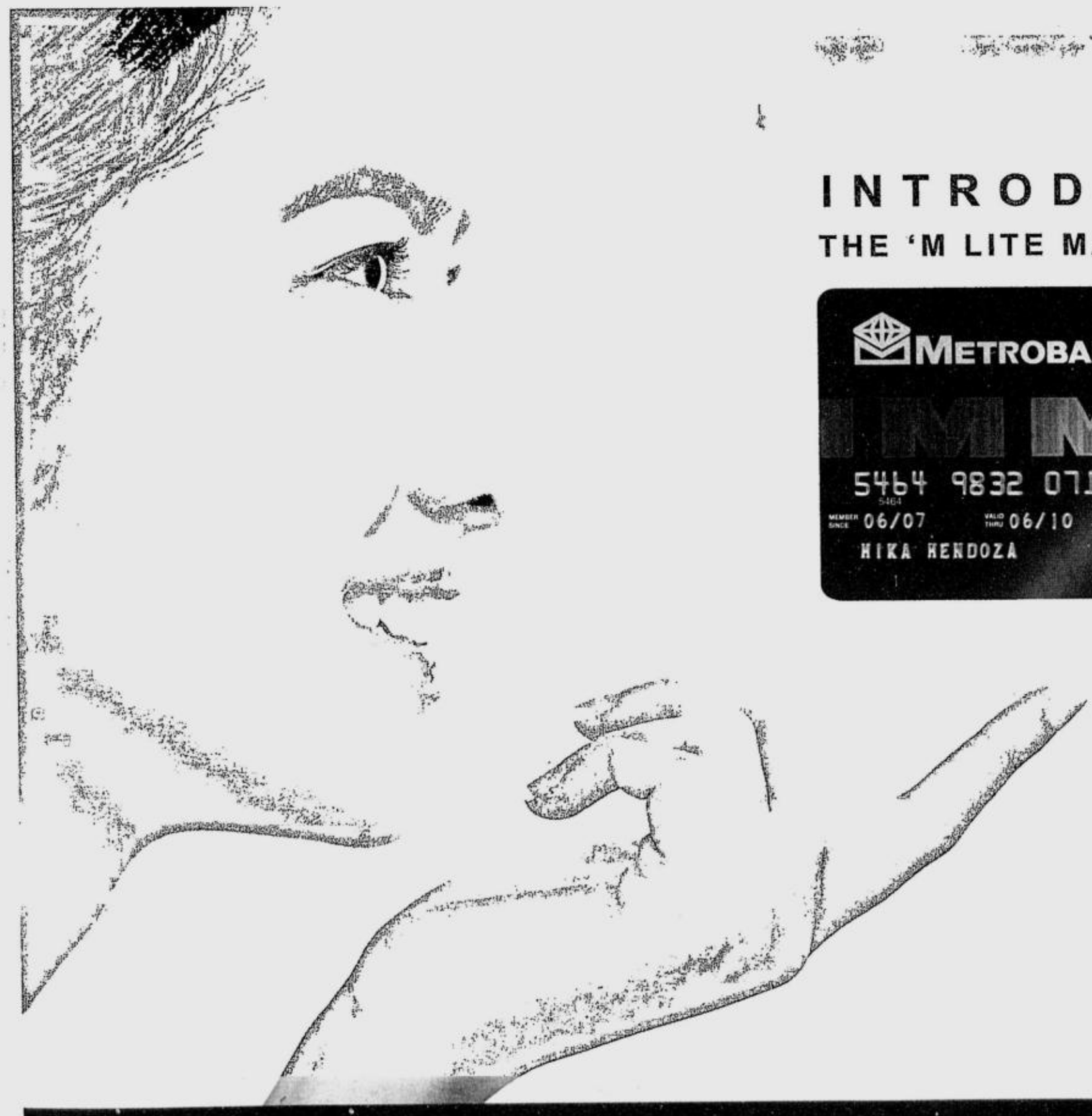

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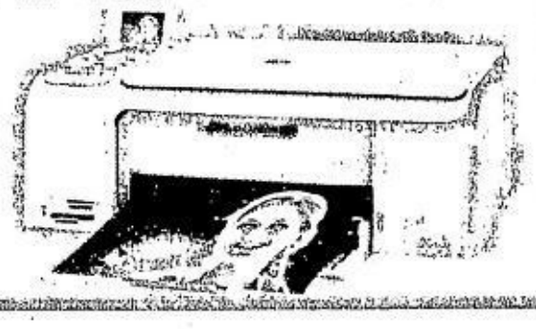

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- Printer, scanner, copier
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- Scan up to 1200 x 1200 dpi optical resolution/48-bit
- 20-page ADF and junk fax barrier

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P9,990

- Printer, scanner, copier, fax
- Up to 4800-optimised dpi colour printing and laser quality text
- Print and copy at up to 20 ppm (black) or 13ppm (colour)
- 2-line text LCD screen
- Scan up to 1200 x 2400 dpi optical resolution / 48-bit
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2. Two ways to claim:
   Option1: Fax or email the following documents to Yeaps Corporation and attention the documents to Ms RC Concepcion
   a. Sales Invoice/Official receipt
   b. Cut out printer serial number sticker
   c. Cut out promotion sticker
   d. Valid ID
   NOTE: A customer representative will contact you on the claiming/ delivery instructions.

   Yeaps Corporation's contact information are as follows: Telephone No.: (02) 7532558, Fax No. (02) 845 1634, Email Address: hp_synergy@yeaps.com, Office Address: 2306 Herrera Tower, Rufino corner Valero Street, Salcedo Village Makati City.

   Option 2: You may also claim the Crocs Footwear directly at Crocs Store (02) 856-1358 located at Bonifacio High Street Bonifacio Global City, Taguig City. Just present and submit above documents cited in OPTION 1
3. Redemption of Crocs Footwear is valid until September 30, 2007.

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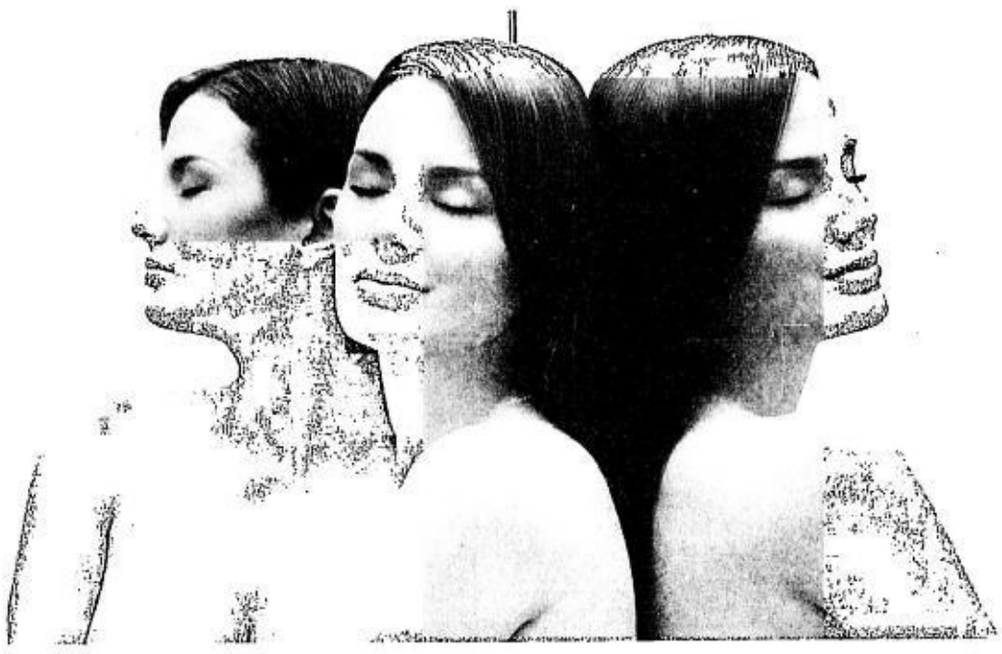
Per DTI Permit No. 1382, Series of 2007.

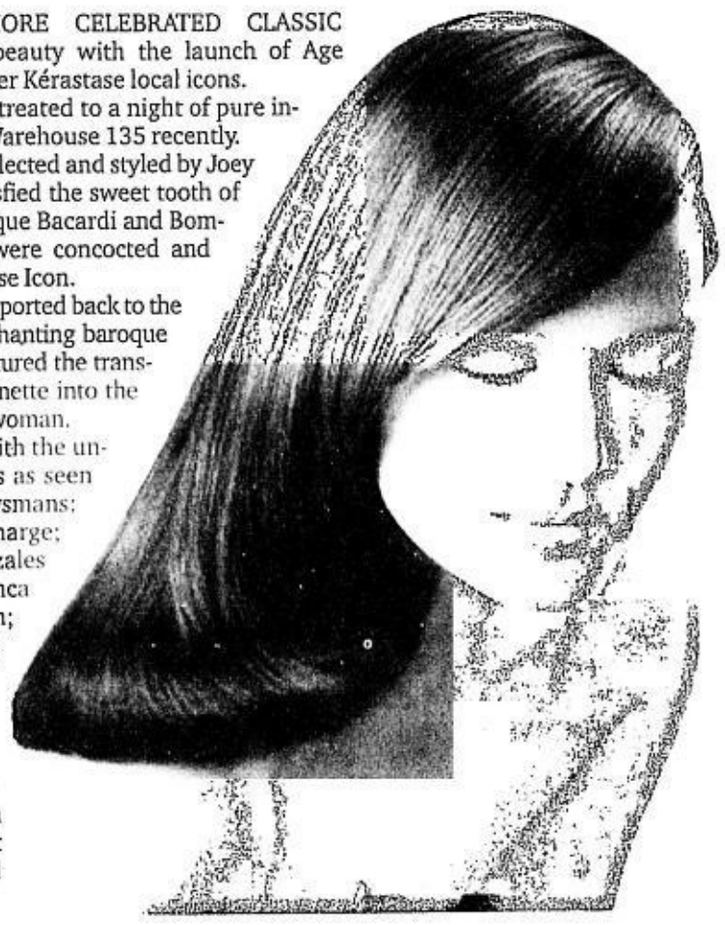
BEAUTY



BIANCA Araneta for Kérastase's Reflection

Redefining beauty

TWEETIE de Leon-Gonzales for Resistance



KÉRASTASE ONCE MORE CELEBRATED CLASSIC elegance and timeless beauty with the launch of Age Recharge and the first-ever Kérastase local icons.

Over 300 guests were treated to a night of pure indulgence and luxury at Warehouse 135 recently.

Hors d'oeuvres were selected and styled by Joey Carpo. Häagen-Dazs satisfied the sweet tooth of party-goers while six unique Bacardi and Bombay Sapphire cocktails were concocted and named after each Kérastase Icon.

The audience was transported back to the Victorian era with an enchanting baroque dance number, which featured the transformation of Marie Antoinette into the contemporary Kérastase woman.

The event climaxed with the unveiling of the local icons as seen from the lenses of Wig Tysmans: Rina Ortiz for Age Recharge; Tweetie de Leon-Gonzales for Resistance; Bianca Araneta for Reflection; Jessica Kienle for Soleil; Trisha Bermudez for Nutritive; and Armand del Rosario for Specifique.

DJ Montano and Abbygale Arenas-de Leon were crowned best dressed monsieur and madam of the night.

Silky smooth nail polish

CARONIA INTRODUCES A contemporary diamond French manicure collection that gives a silky smooth, crystallizing finish to fingers and toes.

Using components imported from Europe, Caronia's unique colors are long-wearing, have lasting shine and are easy to apply.

It's the top choice for salons, manicurists and Filipinas who share a love for color and discriminating detail.

Caronia nail polish and nail care products are available at The Landmark, SM Department Stores and Supermarkets, Robinsons' Department Stores and Big R Supermarkets, Ever Department Stores and Supermarkets, Isetann Department Stores, Shopwise, Watson's, Hortaleza, Mercury Drug Stores and other leading retail outlets nationwide.

New anti-aging makeup

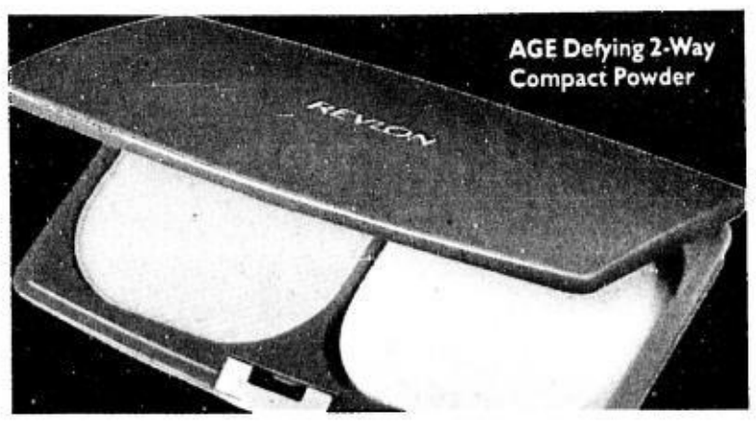
REVLON INTRODUCES THE new Age Defying 2-Way Compact Powder with Botafirm, a technologically advanced anti-aging makeup. It reduces the appearance of fine lines and wrinkles by up to 50 percent in just two weeks, thanks to Botafirm, an exclusive complex of botanicals and hexapeptide.

Because it works with the skin's own naturally occurring proteins, it helps reduce wrinkles and fine lines, especially on the forehead and around the eyes.

Its Soft Focus Powder smoothes and blends out skin imperfections, for a natural, translucent and long-lasting finish. What's more, skin is nourished with vitamin E and Luffa Hydro-essence, which act as anti-oxidants to help maintain the skin's natural moisture. Revlon Age Defying 2-Way Compact Powder with Botafirm's SPF 12 also protects against harmful UV rays.

Whether you use any of its five available shades wet or dry, this revolutionary Revlon product moisturizes, smoothes and firms skin, so your complexion looks flawless, younger and more radiant.

Available in Watson's, Robinson's, Cinderella, Ever, Gaisano, PCX, Landmark, Sta. Lucia, Mercury Drug Glorietta, Unimart, International Drugs and other leading department stores.



AGE Defying 2-Way Compact Powder

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Editor Emmie G. Velarde

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INSIDE

A rock-solid album for Rivermaya Review/F3

Timmy Cruz's house of pure expressions Living Stars/G1

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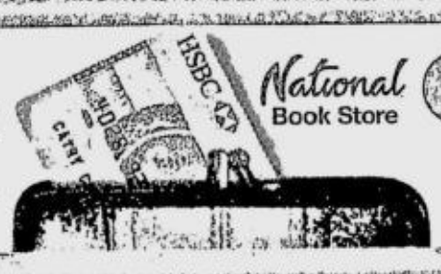

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PINOY TALENTS IN NEW YORK BERNARDO Bernardo (standing) and Ramon de Ocampo are part of a five-person cast that has been getting rave reviews for a stage production in New York. See InHollywood, F6. MATT ZUGALE

MMFF exec: Producers have agreed to new rules

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

AS THE LOCAL MOVIE INdustry gears up for the 33rd Metro Manila Film Festival with the announcement of the first batch of finalists today, Wilson Tieng, a member of the festival executive committee, told INQUIRER Entertainment that several producers have accepted a new MMFF rule that pertains to the revision of the criteria for the selection of screenplays and winner of Best Picture.

> It's now 50 percent for commercial viability in the festival's selection criteria

In the selection of screenplays, higher percentage is now given to Commercial Viability—50 percent, up from last year's 40.

Creativity, Story, Writing Excellence, Innovation and Thematic Value will comprise 40 percent and the remaining 10 percent will be for Filipino Cultural and/or Historical Value.

The same set of standards is basically followed for judging Best Picture. Artistry, Technical Excellence, Innovation and Global Appeal is given 40 percent; Cultural and/or Historical Value, 10; and Box-Office, 50 percent.

Controversy

The commercial success criterion is computed based on the box-office results for the first three days of the festival.

Last year, controversy broke after the selection of OctoArts/M-Zet's "Enteng Kabisote 3" as Best Picture because it was the top earner in the first three days. By the end of the two-week run, however, second Best Picture and Star Cinema's entry "Kasal, Kasali, Kasalo" had overtaken it.

Although Star Cinema protested the Best Pic-

MMFF/ F4

Fiesta Fever at MOA!
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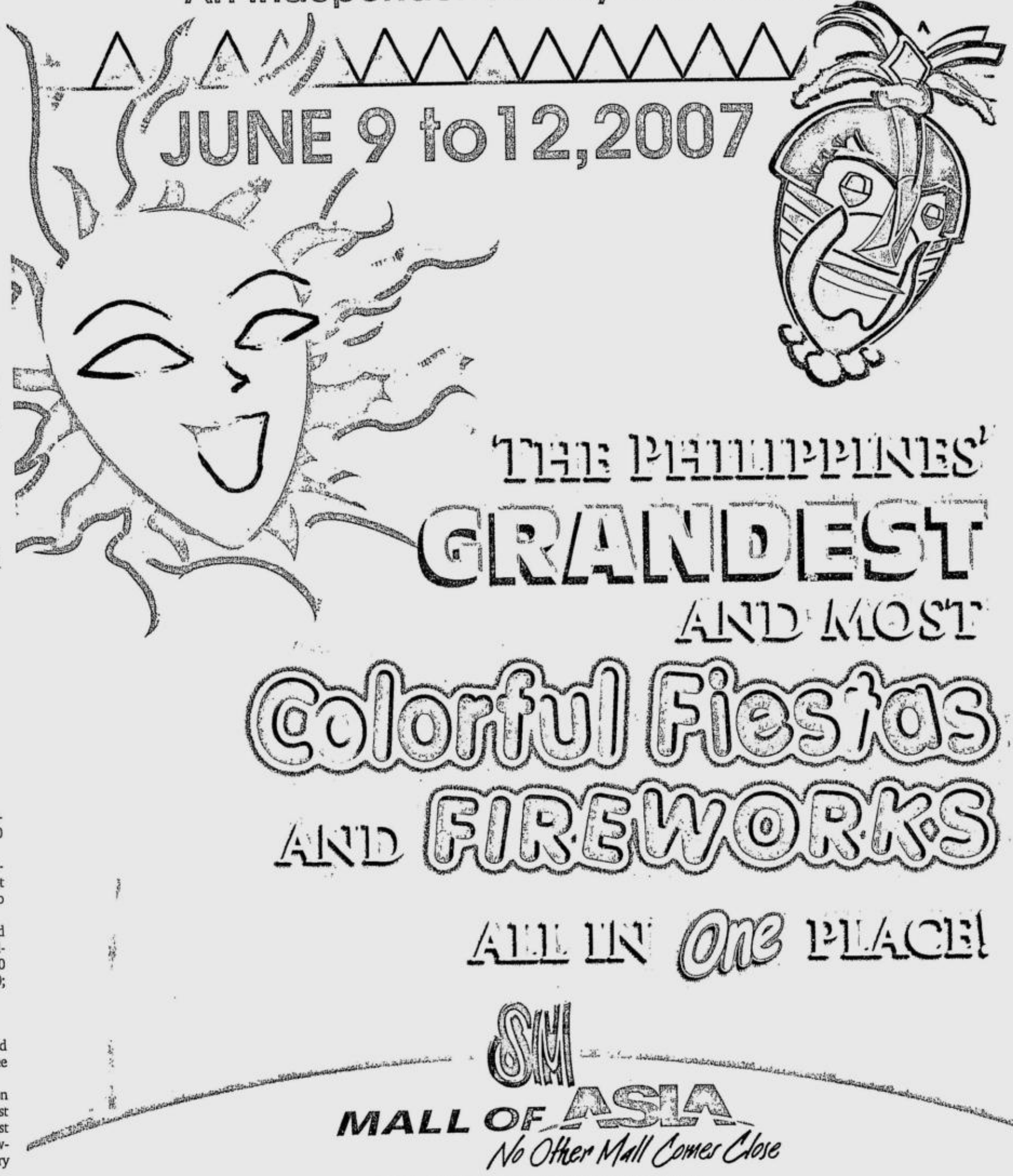

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BY PATRICK McDONNELL

LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO

ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO

DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS

KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA

MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO

TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING

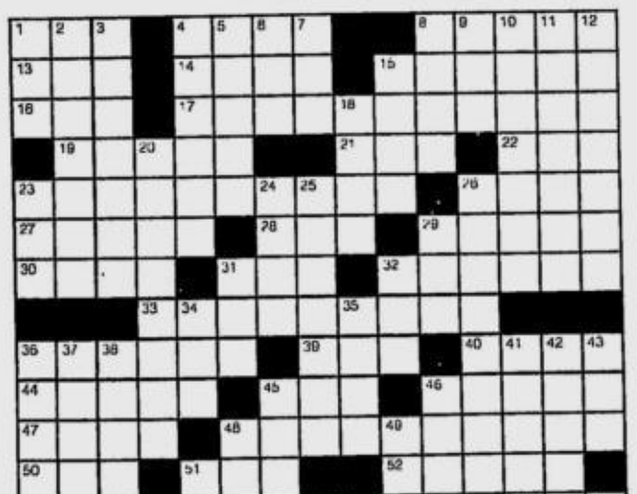
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON

DAILY CROSSWORD

ACROSS
1 Adjective for the Beatles
4 In the center of
8 Western capital
13 Yes, Yves
14 So long, in Soho
15 Singer Kitt
16 Unit of work
17 Intersecting road
19 Goody!
21 Metric speedometer letters
22 Far out!
23 Laundry challenge
26 Shankar of India
27 Singer Bonnie
28 Humble home
29 Irrigate
30 Chile neighbor
31 Beef au __
32 Most dreadful
33 Clothing standard
36 Packing a wallop
39 Charged atom
40 Colombian city
44 Levels
45 Kesey or Griffey
46 __ Heights
47 Landlord's due
48 Musical set in Vietnam
50 Play about Capote
51 Garnet's color
52 Doctrine
53 True or harp mammal
57 Tiny portion
59 Swipes
60 Actress Garr
61 Stadium cheer
62 Lingerie item
63 Smart guy?
64 Whichever

DOWN
1 Opponent
2 Borealis and australis
3 Result of teasing?
4 For no profit
5 Astor and Pickford
6 Skater Midori
7 German article
8 Cleansing routine
9 Bobby of hockey
10 Say again
11 Wheat bundles
12 Grovel
15 Cable stn.
18 Vaudeville playlet
20 Above-average pupil
23 Org. or assoc.
24 As a result
25 Down Under bunch
26 Numismatist's find
29 Ross musical, with "The"
31 Jacuzzi nozzle
32 Cacophony
34 Hosp. workers
35 Male offspring
36 Most cheeky
37 Pigged out
38 Like a secure professor
41 Math course
42 Vientiane resident
43 "Canterbury Tales" locale
45 Joshes
46 Irish tongue
48 Military meal
49 Look and look
51 Depend (on)
54 Boy
55 Rwy. stop
56 Reef predator
58 Biblical pronoun



By Barry Silk
McLean, VA

6/8/07

Thursday's Puzzle Solved

C	I	L	I	A		N	A	D	I	A		A	K	A
D	R	I	L	L		I	C	O	N	S		S	O	B
T	A	L	K	I	S	C	H	E	A	P		P	R	Y
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Y	O	U	S	A	Y	I	T		D	R	A	K	E	S
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C	A	C	K	L	E	S		R	E	S	E	N	T	S
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E	R	R		W	I	T	H	F	L	O	W	E	R	S
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D	A	M		D	O	N	N	E		E	G	A	D	S

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6/8/07

HOROSCOPE

YOU BORN TODAY: You have a strong sense of duty. Many of you are interested in the arts and architecture. You love beauty to fit with function. In fact, many of you have highly developed technical skills. You offer loyalty to your friends, and you expect it in return. You value your individuality. Expect a major change this year, perhaps as significant as around 1998.

Birthdate of: Barbara Bush, former first lady; Keenan Ivory Wayans, comedian/actor; Lindsay Davenport, tennis player.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): You might feel restless and a bit ill at ease today. Don't worry, this feeling will disappear quickly. Tackle simple, routine tasks, and you'll regain your focus.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Surprises from friends or groups could catch you off guard today. However, this simply puts you on guard. In fact, you could have an intense encounter with someone later.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): For whatever reason, people definitely are going to notice you today. Be aware of this, and monitor your appearance, your words and your actions.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Unexpected news about politics, religion or metaphysics might really grab you, for some reason. You're ready to argue and debate some of these points.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Something having to do with debt, taxes, insurance matters, inheritances or shared property could be a surprise for you. It might be a fun surprise; it might not be.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Several things might happen today. Partners might be extra touchy or unpredictable in some way. You might wonder what's happening. Or you might feel rebellious and independent!

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Something having to do with your health or your work could throw you a curveball today or surprise you in some way. It's a minor possibility, but it's there

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Unexpected flirtations could excite you today. (Sizzling!) However, parents should be vigilant about children because this is an accident-prone day for them.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Something unexpected or surprising might take place at home today. Perhaps an unexpected visitor? A no-show? You might buy computer-related items

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Your mind is bright and alert today. You're ready for action. You don't want to be bored, and you probably won't be! Be careful when talking, walking or driving.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Spontaneous purchases and impulse buying are likely. You might dream up new ways of earning money. And of course, you could also dream up new ways of spending it.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): You feel independent and restless today. You're not going to let anyone boss you around. If someone pushes you, you'll react rebelliously. You want to be your own person today. Take extra care with everything you do to avoid minor accidents

CONCEPTIS SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku by Dave Green

							6	
5	3					2	7	
	8		3		4			
		9		3		8		
			8		2			
		1		5		6		
			6		3		1	
	7	5					8	9
	4							

Difficulty Level ★★★★

6/08

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HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

8	6	2	7	9	3	1	4	5
3	7	4	8	5	1	9	2	6
9	5	1	2	6	4	7	3	8
2	4	6	3	8	9	5	7	1
5	9	8	1	7	2	4	6	3
7	1	3	6	4	5	8	9	2
4	8	5	9	2	6	3	1	7
1	2	7	4	3	8	6	5	9
6	3	9	5	1	7	2	8	4

Difficulty Level ★★★

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From Cannes to Kamuning

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

IN THE FRENCH NEWSPAPER LE MONDE, Filipino director Brillante Mendoza's "Foster Child" got a rave review from critic Jean-Luc Douin: "We salute Mendoza who depicts, with the virtuosity of a documentarian, the sacrifices of a woman [from] the slums of Manila who raises abandoned children ... The barrier between reportage and fiction is small, allowing the director to lead us inside the urban mess ... [with his] camera. The way Mendoza justifies [heroine] Thelma's tears is indeed a lesson in filmmaking."

"Foster Child" had its world premiere at the Directors' Fortnight of the Cannes Film Festival last month.

It was the "perfect" birthday gift, lead actress Cherry Pie Picache said of the French trip.

"Cannes is a beautiful place," she looked back.

"Foster" was well-received, she related.

"My fuchsia terno by Frederick Peralta also got good reviews from the audience," she joked.

But after the Cannes high, she went hurtling back to reality as she had to spend her birthday on May 27 in a plane.

She recalled: "I spent almost 24 hours in transit. When I got home the afternoon after my birthday, no one was home. I was so depressed."

It turned out that niece Bayzee had actually planned a surprise party in Kafebaresto, a Kamuning watering hole owned by actors Romnick Sarmenta and Harlene Bautista.

"I was so happy because my son Anton, his dad Gary, my family, co-workers, even high-school and college friends from St. Paul, were there," she recounted.

Among the stars present at the bash were Gelli de Belen, Jomari Yllana, Jean Garcia, Candy Pangilinan and a very pregnant Meryll Soriano.

AT THE "Foster Child" premiere in Cannes, France, with Brillante Mendoza, director.

WITH HIGH-SCHOOL and college friends

WITH WRITER Ralston Jover and Mendoza, at the Cannes presscon for "Foster Child," moderated by Fortnight artistic director Olivier Pere, L.

Willie apologizes to movie-TV board

By Marinel R. Cruz

CONTROVERSIAL television host Willie Revillame has apologized for uttering a statement that the Movie and Television Review and Classification Board found "offensive."

WILLIE

Revillame's apology came a day after the MTRCB released its decision to suspend his noontime game show "Wowowee" for three episodes for a violation of the Board's Implementing Rules and Regulations.

"We did not mean to offend anyone. If we did, we're truly sorry," Revillame said in Filipino on the show's Wednesday episode. "We just want to cheer people up."

Double meaning

On May 30, the Kapamilya Network received the warning from MTRCB chair Marissa Laguardia for the "double-meaning words" uttered on May 26.

According to Laguardia, Willie said, "*Heto na ang gamot sa malalambot*" to introduce a dancer.

The three-episode suspension was for a violation committed by artist Eda Nolan, who "suddenly" exposed her breast during a dance number on the May 12 episode.

"Considering the numerous reprimands ABS-CBN has been meted in prior violations, coupled with the seriousness of the incident at hand, the committee views that [the] suspension would likely be the appropriate penalty," said an MTRCB decision signed by the three-member adjudication committee on June 5.

"Breast exposure" is a violation of PD 1986, Laguardia stressed in her letter to ABS-CBN vice president for Programs Socorro Vidanes.

"We don't know what will happen after the suspension," said Revillame. "We hope it doesn't push through." The decision does not contain a specific date.

In the letter that "Wowowee" production manager Cynthia Jordan sent to MTRCB on June 6 (about Revillame's utterance), she said "the Board's interpretation of the statement was not the intended meaning of the host."

She said Revillame's statement had been "strictly in the context of a commercial endorsement that we cannot publicly disclose as yet."

Rivermaya has solid new album—but no more Rico

By Pocholo Concepcion
Contributor

REVIEW

THE FATE OF ROCK-ALTERNATIVE band Rivermaya hangs in the balance after its leader, Rico Blanco, went solo recently.

But the band's most recent studio album, "Isang Ugat, Isang Dugo" (Viva Records), is rock-solid. Released late last year, it stands to become an invaluable reference material on the 1980s—crucial years that preceded the massive popularity of local alternative music.

Save for "Isang Bandila," commissioned by a TV network for its late-night news program, the rest of the tracks in "Isang Ugat" are all covers—songs which, Rico says, had inspired him to form his own band.

In the CD's liner notes, Rico explains that all he initially wanted was to gather Rivermaya and record for posterity some cuts from "Chemical Wedding," an obscure but highly regarded independent album by Deans December. It is now out of print. Rico's own copy, he says, was "totally worn out after nearly two decades of abuse."

Wonderful tribute

There was no plan for a commercial release, until Rivermaya started covering more songs by other influential local bands that enjoyed cult status in the '80s.

The result is a wonderful tribute album that serves as a link, especially for those clueless on the kind of music Rico was personally attached to prior to his coming of age as a guitar player, keyboardist, singer and songwriter.

Interestingly, the 12 tracks covered here are by bands that show equal facility with English and Filipino songwriting.

Ethic Faces' "Golden Boy" is a bright allegory on racial pride, with an ironic twist that's memorable for Jack Sicat's ad lib lines, "*Ang tatay mong kalbo*," also preserved in the Rivermaya version.

Two songs each by Deans December, Identity Crisis, Violent Playground and Joey Ayala are included. Whether emotionally heavy in lyrics ("Healing," "My Sanctuary"), powerful in images ("Ilog," "Padayon") or just plain catchy in melody ("Tupperware Party," "Never the Bright Lights"), these songs are retained in their original versions, performed almost in note-for-note fashion, because, as Rico justifies, "We were just fans rocking out to our favorite songs."

Reflective

Although excitement builds right from the start, with the new wave moods and attitudes of "Golden Boy," "Tupperware Party," "My Sanctuary," "Things Within" (by Silos) and "Healing," things get reflective with the folk tempo of "Ilog" (with Kitchie Nadal as guest vocalist).

Then hell explodes in the middle with the punk anger of the Jerks' "Romantic Kill"—a song heard very rarely and only on dzRJ's vintage "Pinoy Rock & Rhythm" Sunday show.

The setting turns into a celebration of working-class values with "Padayon," then bursts into bitterness and admonition with the Wuds' "Inosente Lang ang Nagtataka" (Raimund Marasigan joining in the vocal ruckus), before finally winding down with the optimism of "Sumigaw, Umawit Ka."

On hindsight, Rico must have realized it was impossible to squeeze, in one album, other important—and possibly more influential—songs by other artists that changed his life. For this he tried to make up by thanking the following in the credits: Betrayed, Urban Bandits, Dead Ends and Private Stock.

Even fashion

Even the fashionable clothing boutiques of the time are acknowledged: Shambu, High Adventure and Khumbmella, as well as radio stations RT, NU and XB 102.

"Isang Ugat, Isang Dugo" gave Rico Blanco the opportunity to relive the most formative years of his life as a budding musician. The songs he recreated with Rivermaya in this album seek to reconnect to the roots and bloodline that fed his generation's hunger for music other than their Western counterparts.

For this alone, Rivermaya has put to rest any lingering doubt that its own music deserved to be heard, right from the time it dared set foot on Club Dredd.

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T-REX — 2:30PM 4:00PM 7:30PM — Admission Prices: P 200
ANT BULLY — 5:30PM — Admission Prices: P 250
1 OCEAN'S 13
2 MEET THE ROBINSONS
3 BORDERTOWN
4 MR. BEAN'S HOLIDAY
5 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN
6 SILIP
PREMIERE CINEMA: SHREK 3
CENTERSTAGE: PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN 3
PODIUM
CINEMA 1: OCEAN'S 13
CINEMA 2: PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN 3
633-8976

SM NORTH EDSA 929-5452
1 OCEAN'S 13
2 MR. BEAN'S HOLIDAY
3 ZODIAC
4 MEET THE ROBINSONS
5 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN
6 BORDERTOWN
7 OCEAN'S 13
8 SHREK 3
9 SILIP
10 SPIDER-MAN 3
11 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN 3
12 BORDERTOWN

SM MEGACINEMA 633-1901
1 OCEAN'S 13
2 SHREK 3
3 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN 3
4 SPIDER-MAN 3
5 MR. BEAN'S HOLIDAY
6 MEET THE ROBINSONS
7 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN
8 BORDERTOWN
9 SILIP
10 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN
11 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN 3
12 ZODIAC

SM CITY FAIRVIEW 935-0749
1 BORDERTOWN
2 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN
3 SHREK 3
4 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN 3
5 SILIP
6 MR. BEAN'S HOLIDAY
7 OCEAN'S 13
8 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN
9 SPIDER-MAN 3
10 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN 3
11 MEET THE ROBINSONS
12 ZODIAC

SM CITY STA. MESA 716-1416
1 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN 3
2 MR. BEAN'S HOLIDAY
3 OCEAN'S 13
4 SILIP
5 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN
6 ZODIAC
7 BORDERTOWN
8 SHREK 3
9 MEET THE ROBINSONS
10 SPIDER-MAN 3

SM CITY SAN LAZARO 786-2488
1 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN 3
2 OCEAN'S 13
3 MEET THE ROBINSONS
4 MR. BEAN'S HOLIDAY
5 SILIP
6 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN

SM SOUTHMALL 806-6888
1 OCEAN'S 13
2 SILIP
3 MEET THE ROBINSONS
4 BORDERTOWN
5 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN 3
6 SHREK 3
7 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN
8 MR. BEAN'S HOLIDAY
9 SPIDER-MAN 3

SM CITY BICUTAN 776-3055
1 OCEAN'S 13
2 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN
3 SILIP
4 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN 3

SM CITY MANILA 523-9240
1 BORDERTOWN
2 SPIDER-MAN 3
3 MR. BEAN'S HOLIDAY
4 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN 3
5 MEET THE ROBINSONS
6 OCEAN'S 13
7 SHREK 3
8 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN 3
9 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN
10 SILIP
11 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN
12 OCEAN'S 13

SM CITY DASMARINAS (046)4323201-04
1 MEET THE ROBINSONS
2 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN
3 SILIP
4 OCEAN'S 13

SM VALENZUELA 293-3917
1 OCEAN'S 13
2 MEET THE ROBINSONS
3 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN
4 SILIP

SM CITY SUCAT 829-4975
1 SILIP
2 OCEAN'S 13
3 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN
4 MEET THE ROBINSONS

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SM CITY BACOOR (046)417-3868
1 MEET THE ROBINSONS
2 MR. BEAN'S HOLIDAY
3 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN 3
4 SILIP
5 OCEAN'S 13
6 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN
7 SPIDER-MAN 3
8 SHREK 3

SM CITY CLARK (045)625-5844-45
1 OCEAN'S 13
2 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN 3
3 MR. BEAN'S HOLIDAY
4 MEET THE ROBINSONS
5 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN
6 SILIP

SM CITY MARILAO (044)9332013-17
1 MR. BEAN'S HOLIDAY
2 SILIP
3 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN
4 MEET THE ROBINSONS

SM CITY BATANGAS 865-6401-04
1 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN 3
2 SILIP
3 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN
4 MEET THE ROBINSONS

SM CITY PAMPANGA (045)9637061-65
1 OCEAN'S 13
2 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN 3
3 MR. BEAN'S HOLIDAY
4 MEET THE ROBINSONS
5 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN
6 SILIP

SM CIY LIPA (043) 784-0187
1 MEET THE ROBINSONS
2 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN
3 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN 3
4 SILIP

SM CITY LUCENA (042)7108977-80
1 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN
2 OCEAN'S 13
3 MEET THE ROBINSONS
4 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN 3

SM CITY BAGUIO (074)6197838-39
1 OCEAN'S 13
2 MEET THE ROBINSONS
3 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN
4 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN 3

SM SUPERCENTER MOLINO (046)474-2160
1 OCEAN'S 13
2 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN
3 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN 3
4 SILIP

SM CITY STA. ROSA (049)5349811
1 OCEAN'S 13
2 MEET THE ROBINSONS
3 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN 3
4 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN

VISAYAS MINDANAO

SM CITY DAVAO (082)2976998
1 OCEAN'S 13
2 MEET THE ROBINSONS
3 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN
4 SILIP
5 SHREK 3
6 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN 3

SM CITY CAGAYAN (088)859-2884
1 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN 3
2 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN
3 MEET THE ROBINSONS
4 OCEAN'S 13

SM CITY ILOILO (033)3200422
1 FIREHOUSE DOG
2 MEET THE ROBINSONS
3 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN 3
4 SHREK 3
5 OCEAN'S 13
6 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN
7 SILIP
8 MR. BEAN'S HOLIDAY

SM CITY CEBU (032)231-3876
1 SHREK 3/ OCEAN'S 13
2 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN 3
3 28 WEEKS LATER
4 MEET THE ROBINSONS
5 MR. BEAN'S HOLIDAY
6 SILIP
7 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN
8 OCEAN'S 13

SM CITY BACOLOD (034) 708 1010
1 OCEAN'S 13
2 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN 3
3 MEET THE ROBINSONS
4 SILIP

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MOVIE GUIDE
NOW SHOWING

Shang Cineplex
1 (DOLBY) OCEAN'S THIRTEEN
2 (DOLBY) MEET THE ROBINSONS
3 (DOLBY) MR. BEAN'S HOLIDAY
4 PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN-3
PREMIERE
(DOLBY) OCEAN'S THIRTEEN

Cinema 2000 Waltermart Makati
Waltermart Center, Chino Roces Ave. cor. Antonio Arnaiz Pio del Pilar, Makati City Tel 816.4214/816.4216
1 MEET THE ROBINSONS
2 OCEAN'S THIRTEEN
3 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN
4 PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN-3

Starmall EDSA-SHAW
(Mandaluyong) tel. 7266150
3 SILIP
4 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN
5 RESERVED

Metropolis Star Cinema
www.clickthecity.com.ph
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1 SILIP
2 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN
3 OCEAN'S THIRTEEN
4 PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN-3

THEATRES
1 LUCKY YOU
2 SILIP
3 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN

Pacific Mall Lucena Cinemagic
1 OCEAN'S THIRTEEN
2 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN
3 RESERVED
4 RESERVED

Filinvest Festival Cinema
(Muntinlupa) tel 850.3571 or 72
1 BORDERTOWN
2 PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN-3
3 MEET THE ROBINSONS
4 PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN-3
5 MEET THE ROBINSONS
6 OCEAN'S THIRTEEN
7 MR. BEAN'S HOLIDAY
8 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN
9 SILIP
10 SHREK THE THIRD

Blue Wave Marikina
Sumulong Highway cor. Mayor Gil Fernando Street, Sto. Niño, Marikina City tel. 9341927
1 (DOLBY) OCEAN'S THIRTEEN
2 (DOLBY) PAANO KITA IIBIGIN
3 (DOLBY) BORDERTOWN
4 (DOLBY) RESERVED

SUPER CINERAMA
Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto tel 7334228
1 OCEAN'S THIRTEEN
2 PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN-3
3 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN
4 SILIP
5 BORDERTOWN

Marketplace
Mandaluyong tel 533.3851/533.3856
1 FRACTURE
2 SHREK THE THIRD
3 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN
4 PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN-3

Masagana Cinema
(Pasay) tel 833.3290/833.3274
1 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN
2 MR. BEAN'S HOLIDAY
3 SILIP

Center Mall Cinema
Baguio Center Mall, Magsaysay Avenue (Baguio City) tel (074)-(4449346)
1 OCEAN'S THIRTEEN
2 MEET THE ROBINSON

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03
1 PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN-3
2 OCEAN'S THIRTEEN
3 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN
4 SILIP

Centre Plaza Cinema
(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007
1 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN
2 PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN-3

Eastwood Cinemas
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1 MEET THE ROBINSON
2 OCEAN'S THIRTEEN
3 OCEAN'S THIRTEEN
4 PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN-3

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Movie Theatres of the New Millenium

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
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1 MEET THE ROBINSON
2 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN
3 OCEAN'S THIRTEEN
4

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall
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1 RESERVED
2 RESERVED
3 RESERVED
4 RESERVED

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix
(Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771
1 THE REAPING
2 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN
3 PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN-3

Cinema 2000 Metrotown
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1 SHREK THE THIRD
2 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN
3 PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN-3
4 FIREHOUSE DOG

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Plandel) tel (044) 795.3320
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2 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN
3 PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN-3

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
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1 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN
2 SHREK THE THIRD

Lianas Cinema
(Pasig) tel 640.4748
1 PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN
2 PAN'S LABYRINTH

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276
1 MR. BEAN'S THE HOLIDAY
2 NAGHUHUMIYAW
3 NG MAMULAT SI EVA
4 PAN'S LABYRINTH

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202
1 CONDEMNED
2 PUKYUTAN
3 OCEAN'S THIRTEEN
4 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN
5 PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790
1 SILIP
2 ZOMBIES
3 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN
4 PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN

Berma Cinema
(Baclaran) tel 879.2030/879.2029
1 SILIP
2 PILYA

MOVIES / SCHEDULES / PRICES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

ROUNDUP

Rated 'G'

20TH CENTURY FOX'S "FANTASTIC FOUR: RISE OF THE SILVER Surfer" has been given a "G" rating by MTRCB review board, which opens the film to the general audience.

The film was placed under the evaluation of board members Lucia Orense, Benedicto Tarnate and Eric Mallonga.

The MTRCB board unanimously granted the film a "G" rating and forwarded a statement with high recommendation to local distributor Warner Bros. (F.E.), Inc. pronouncing the film as "A picturesque, enigmatic, superhero fiction fantasy with very strong, positive and redeeming values such as selfless sacrifice in saving the world from apocalyptic destruction; the use of science for humanity; and the nurturing and affectionate love despite of adversity and human suffering. Such entertaining movie warrants a General Audience classification and is ideal for family viewership."

The movie opens in over 200 screens nationwide on June 13.

'Reading Room'

"THE READING ROOM"

Veteran actor James Earl Jones plays William Campbell, a wealthy widower tasked to fulfill his wife's final wish of building a library for a depressed community in "The Reading Room" on June 17, 9 p.m. on Hallmark Channel.

Determined to give these people a chance to change their lives, he gives away free soda to draw them in.

'Kombai Tribe'

Discovery Channel's six-part premiere series "Living With The Kombai Tribe" shows how two extreme travelers abandon all luxuries to live with a people whose way of life has changed little since the Stone Age.

The goal of adventurers Mark Anstice and Olly Steeds is to track down and live with the Kombai tribe, the world's last hunter-gatherers.

The show premieres June 11 at 8 p.m., with replays on Tuesdays at 1 a.m. and 11 a.m.

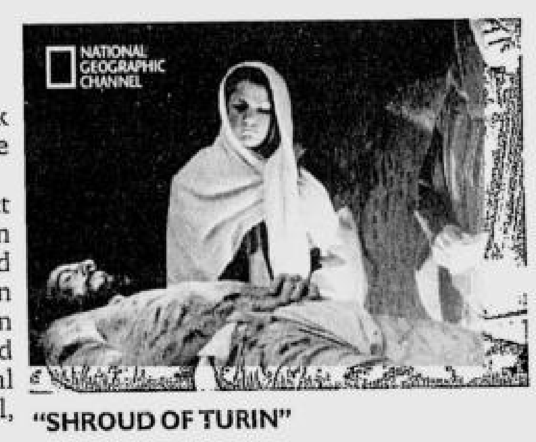
RP's top model

In Episode 13 of "Philippines' Next Top Model," Rina and Grendel advance in the competition's final phase following Jen's elimination.

From Amandarling Boutique, to Hong Kong's top fashion magazine Cover Mag, to Greg Derham's fashion company The House of Siren, Rina and Grendel impressively presented themselves before their prospective clients as they carried out their individual casting.

The show's grand season finale airs on June 12, 8:30 p.m. on RPN.

'Shroud of Turin'



"SHROUD OF TURIN"

Can science unlock the mystery of the Shroud of Turin?

Scientists conduct an investigation in an attempt to understand the mysterious origin of this precious relic in "Is It Real 3: Shround Of Turin" on National Geographic Channel, June 12 at 10 p.m.

Comedy shows

"Comedy Central" showcases the hottest comedians in stand-up today in the half-hour series on Sundays, 10 p.m. on Jack TV.

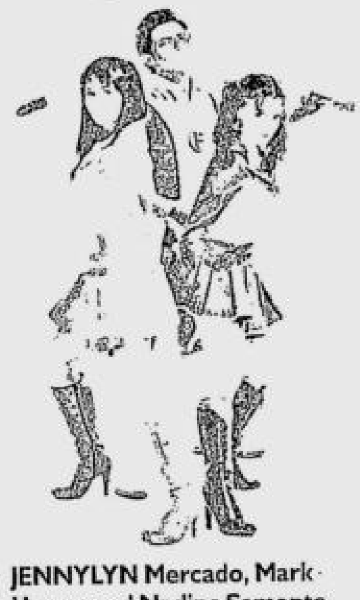
At 11:30 p.m., big comedians introduce hopefuls for the chance to be their successors in the new program "Premium Blend."

Superheroes

In the next episodes of GMA-7's "Fantastic Man," the crime-busting superhero will be joining forces with the two powerful siblings on weeknight prime time television.

"Super Twins" (Jennylyn Mercado as Super S and Nadine Samonte as Super T) will be crossing over to Saturday prime time TV even as the series made an explosive conclusion last week.

Their super powers will complement the extraordinary abilities of Fantastic Man (Mark Herras), who is in for the most dangerous situation that endangers his life.


JENNYLYN Mercado, Mark Herras and Nadine Samonte

MMFF exec . . .

From page F1

ture result last year, it has fielded an entry for this year, Tieng said.

Star Cinema, represented by Tess Fuentes, was among the movie producers present during a consultative meeting set with MMFF officials on March 14.

In said meeting, the rule changes were presented, among other concerns, to industry representatives, recalled Tieng.

"Most of the producers have accepted the changes. They agreed that the new rule [50 percent for Box Office] would give the power of choosing Best Picture to the paying public," Tieng explained.

The other producers present at the same meeting were Orly Ilacad of OctoArts and Canary; Roselle Monteverde-Teo of MaQ and Regal; Charlie Peralta of CM Films; Elwood Perez of Earth Moving Pictures; Cirio Santiago of Premiere; Joji Alonso of MLR, among others.

The fact that major producers have submitted entries this year signifies that they have agreed with the new criteria, said Tieng.

WILSON TIENG

He added that the first six entries will be announced today.

The first batch will open on Dec. 25; the second batch, composed of three films, on Jan. 1.

Tieng pointed out that producers could resubmit revised scripts (that had been earlier submitted in the first batch), as well as new screenplays, for the second batch.

Deadline for submission of entries is on June 18. The second batch will be announced on June 28.

COMING OUT OF HIS EARS
That's actor Jericho Rosales' just recently exhibited passion for music. In this photograph by Jude Thaddeus Bautista, Echo is performing with own band Jeans at Club O, the old Dish, at the ABS-CBN building in Quezon City. Bautista has a photo exhibit, "Buhay OFW," opening on June 11 at the Smart Tower on Ayala Avene. The exhibit includes excerpts of stories written by Bautista on OFWs in Hong Kong and Singapore.

DID YOU KNOW...

Not Angelina the actress

NEW YORK—ANGELINA JOLIE, WHO WON AN Oscar for 1999's "Girl, Interrupted," says she wants to be remembered not for her work as an actress but for her humanitarian work. *AP*

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MR. BEAN'S HOLIDAY G 1:50,3:50,5:50, 7:50,9:50	MEET THE ROBINSONS G 1:10,3:25,5:40, 7:55,10:10	OCEAN'S THIRTEEN PG13 1:00,3:30,6:00,8:30
PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN 3 G 12:50,4:00, 7:10,10:20	BORDERTOWN R13 12:50,3:15,5:40, 8:00,10:30	OCEAN'S THIRTEEN PG13 12:30,3:00,5:30, 8:00,10:30

MOVIES & SCHEDULES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

Latest comic romp doesn't add up to a hill of... beans

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

THE BEST ARGUMENT AGAINST REVISITing successful film formats is currently on view on our movie screens—"Mr. Bean's Holiday." It pains us to have to say this, because we've enjoyed Bean's mimetic TV and film romps through the years.

This time around, however, Bean (**Rowan Atkinson**) tries too hard to be funny, and his creative team is generally unable to come up with truly funny situations and right gags to keep viewers genuinely bemused.

In "Holiday," Bean wins a free trip to a beach resort in Cannes, France. It turns out that winning the raffle was the easy part—it's much tougher actually getting to Cannes, because Bean is such a klutz.

He gets locked out of trains, is suspected of having kidnapped a director's son, single-handedly ruins a commercial shoot, and proceeds to destroy a film being shown at the Cannes Film Festival, before he finally gets to enjoy his delayed vacation.

As usual, Bean endures all of these trials and tribulations while uttering only a few words, thus sustaining his signature style of visual comedy.

Naps between jokes

In his latest film, however, the visual drolleries aren't as comically productive as before, so the viewer has a lot of time to take quick naps between jokes that actually work.

That may be good for sleep-deprived viewers, but moviegoers in search of frequent infusions of fun would feel sorely disappointed.

Aside from the film's less than choice comedy material, we must lay part of the blame for this disappointment squarely at Atkinson's door. He's still in fine physical-comedy form, but his laugh-making efforts look excessive and overly urgent.

The former master of comic timing appears to have forgotten that comedians need to be supremely relaxed to make their scenes comfortably funny. Here, Atkinson jerks, mugs and pushes in a desperate attempt to make his inferior material work—and ends up only making things worse.

A sequence involving oysters at a posh French restaurant illustrates this. To begin with, Bean's distaste for oysters isn't very amusing. To make it funnier, Bean pretends to eat the slimy seafood, but actually chucks them into his napkin. Not funny at all.

Then, he looks for a place to hide them, and settles for a wealthy woman's handbag. Why there? Go figure.

Of course, it's only a matter of time before Madame reaches inside her bag, feels the slimy beasties within, and lets loose with an operatic shriek. Not funny *at all*.

It's really time for Bean/Atkinson to reevaluate his career prospects. If he can't get to work with more comically creative writers and directors, he could take his cue from other senior comedians and quit while he's ahead. As it is, "Mr. Bean's Holiday" indicates that he's already overstayed his welcome.

Feedback

FROM Eladio R. Casas of Quezon City:

"I have a suggestion to our filmmakers so they can come up with a movie that will inspire many people: They should tell the stories of three children who became heroes at a tender age. The three-in-one movie will affect viewers emotionally, and also inspire them to be selfless in their own lives.

"I would also like to see a movie made on the life and death of **Ninoy Aquino**. The life of **Cardinal Sin** is also inspiring and important in our spiritual and political development. Enough of sexpots, ghosts and slapstick comedies—our heroes have a lot to teach us about ourselves and what we can become..."

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CINEMA 5 OCEANS 13 11:00 , 1:55 , 4:50 7:45 10:40 PG-13
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3	OCEAN'S THIRTEEN 2:20, 5:20, 8:20, 11:20 PG-13
4	PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN 3 12:30, 3:50, 7:20, 10:50 G

SHOW TIME

WCOPA delegates set a fundraiser

THIS year's Filipino delegates to the 2007 World Championships of Performing Arts (WCOPA)—Reuben Laurente, Reymond Sajor, Raki Vega, Iago Raterta, the Calisang siblings and The Revelation Band—plus 2005 WCOPA grand champ Jed Madela, will hold a fundraising concert at Teatrino, Promenade in Greenhills on June 15, at 8:30 p.m.

WCOPA is cited as the Olympics for performers and entertainers.

Every competitor needs US$3,000 for registration fee, airfare, food and accommodations at the Hollywood venue, from July 28 to Aug 5.

Call or text (0928) 772-5254 or e-mail stages_pr@i-manila.com.ph.

Winston sessions

WINSTON'S "Morning Sessions" will be held at Somethin' Fishy in Eastwood, Libis tonight.

Featured bands are Sugarfree, Imago and Typecast.

Tomorrow, Winston presents Bamboo at the Aruba Bar in Mall of Asia. Other Winston events are set in Leyte on June 23 and Metrowalk Ortigas on June 29.

'Magno Rubio' triumphs anew in NY

...and the latest on Bloom, Costner and Andrews

ONLY IN HOLLYWOOD

Ruben V. Nepales

LOS ANGELES—KUDOS TO **PAOLO Montalban, Ramon de Ocampo**, the ever-fabulous **Bernardo Bernardo** and the rest of the cast and talents behind the current revival of "The Romance of Magno Rubio" in New York.

The play, ongoing at the The Culture Project on 55 Mercer Street in Manhattan, has been getting good reviews.

Variety's **Marilyn Stasio** wrote a virtual rave: "Under **Loy Arcenas'** tight-as-a-drumskin helming, the all-male ensemble rocks the house with this revival of 'The Romance of Magno Rubio.' The modern-day folk tale about the lovesick dreams of a Filipino-American farm worker won a 2003 OBIE for scribe **Lonnie Carter**, who adopted the fable from a short story by **Carlos Bulosan** that exposed the plight of migrant laborers during the 1920s and '30s... [The] present-day furor over illegal immigration gives resonance to the play's blunt take on exploited farm laborers like Magno Rubio (**Jojo Gonzalez**) and his fellow workers in the California fields.

"After being lured here by visions of good jobs, high wages and willing women, the men find themselves living in squalid conditions (well realized by meticulous production values) and worked like slaves. No wonder a poor schmuck like Rubio answers a personal ad from an Arkansas farm girl named Clarabelle who holds out promises of marriage.

No stereotype

"Savvier than Rubio (who, at 4 feet 6 inches and 'dark as a coconut ball,' is no young girl's idea of a great catch), the rest of the guys in this miserable bunk-hole alternately laugh at him and try to wise him up. Without falling into stereotype, each has a recognizable character and a clear part to play in the education of their gullible friend.

"The infinitely wise Prudencio (**Bernardo Bernardo**) tries the compassionate approach. The educated Nick (**Arthur T. Acuna**) can't bring himself to burst Rubio's bubble and ends up writing his love letters. Atoy (**Ramon De Ocampo**), the camp clown, can't help mocking his naïveté. Only tall, handsome, narcissistic Claro (**Paolo Montalban**) is cruel enough to take advantage of Rubio's blind faith in his Clarabelle—and, by metaphorical extension, of his dumb trust in America's promises.

ORLANDO BLOOM

"What keeps us involved (and, in the case of one enthusiastic preview audience, shouting with delight) is the skill with which helmer Arcenas has adapted traditional Filipino musical rhythms and storytelling traditions and flawlessly integrated their joyous aspects into an exceedingly grim tale.

Musical beat

"No less than street-corner rap, the play's insistent musical beat (pounded out by sticks that double as martial arts weapons) and rhyming verses (adapted from the Filipino literary tradition of *Balagtasan*) draw the faithful into a community experience from which outsiders need not feel excluded."

Frank Scheck of the New York Post chimed in: "Director **Loy Arcenas** has provided a wonderfully vivid production that is superbly acted by the five-member ensemble, especially **Jojo Gonzalez**. The actor plays the titular role of a diminutive, love-struck laborer who has become infatuated with an Arkansas woman he has met through a lonely-hearts ad."

Michael Criscuolo wrote on nytheatre.com: "The teamwork and the obvious rapport that 'Magno Rubio/s five-person cast has is undeniable. They influence and inform each other much like a relay team passing the baton from one runner to the next—or a jazz band feeding off the group's collective energy. Jojo Gonzalez and **Arthur T. Acuña** give endearingly powerhouse performances as Magno and Nick, respectively, with Bernardo Bernardo, Ramon de Ocampo, and Paolo Montalban providing what may be the best support in town right now as their coworkers. All five actors are so thoroughly convincing that one never doubts for a second that they are anyone else but those characters."

"The Romance..." is a production of the OBIE Award-winning Ma-Yi Theater Company. One of Ma-Yi's staunchest supporters is supermodel, always glam **Bessie Badilla del Castillo**, who co-chaired the leading theater company's recent Benefit and Awards Dinner. More information about this production is available at www.ma-yitheatre.org.

Now or never

Speaking of "theatah," Orlando Bloom will make his West End debut next month. In a press conference, the star of the box-office record-breaking "Pirates of the Caribbean: At World's End" said, "I have been wanting to do theater ever since I left school. I just thought, it's now or never. I will do a fantastic play called 'In Celebration' by **David Storey** who is a great theater writer."

The actor who attended two theater schools in London claimed he was not influenced by **Daniel Radcliffe**'s successful foray into the stage. "I saw Daniel Radcliffe in 'Equus,'" Orlando said. "I thought he was great. But he had absolutely nothing to do with my decision to do a play. I trained for three years to do theater."

On celebrating a milestone just last month, Orlando quipped: "When I turned 30, I thought, I don't have to take myself seriously anymore because the number does it for me (laughter). I had a great party with friends here in LA. I had some friends in Hawaii because we were shooting there. I had some friends from London, too. I love to kick up my heels and a bit of a dance every now and then."

Father again

In another press con, **Kevin Costner**, who has the title role in the thriller "Mr. Brooks," talked about being a brand-new father again, at 52: "It's pretty much the same. I'm not trying to get it right the second time because I wasn't so busy with my career the first time. I participated in my children's life all through my first marriage so I don't have this nagging feeling that I didn't do it right. If anything, I want to make sure I do it as well as I think I did with Annie, Lily and Joe." Kevin's new baby is the result of his second marriage to model **Christine Baumgartner**, 33.

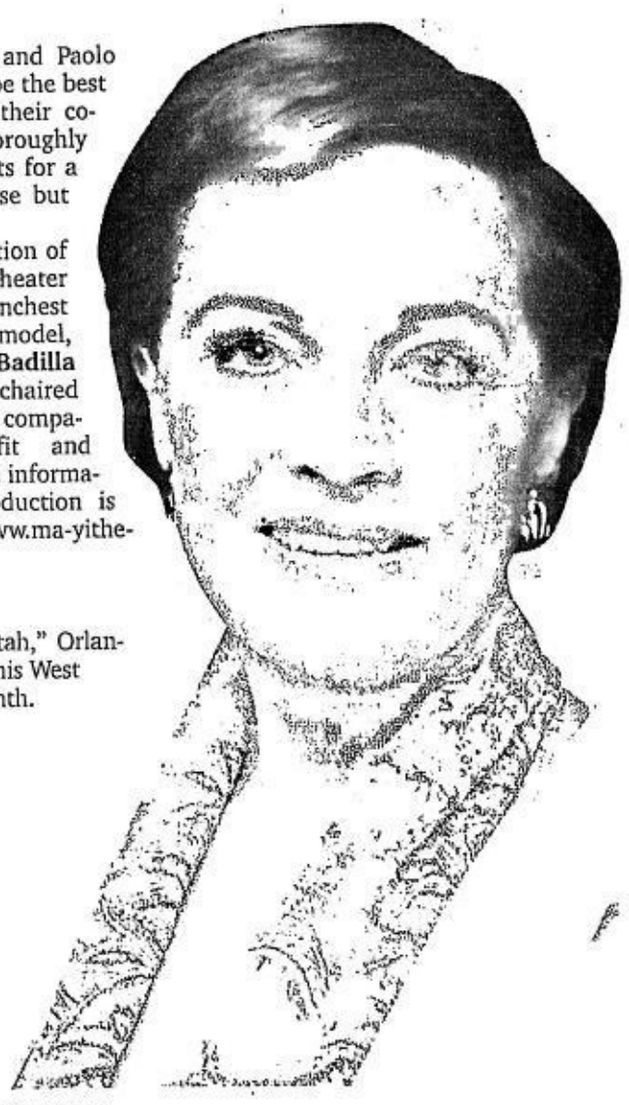
KEVIN COSTNER

Asked if he has any addiction like his psychopath character in "Mr. Brooks," the actor admitted, "I don't really have that. But I watch a lot of these fishing shows late at night (laughter). It's kind of sick."

Regal air

As we've written previously, **Julie Andrews** has a regal air about her. And she looked like a queen—regal, poised—as usual in an interview for "Shrek The Third."

But the beloved icon downplays her queenly qualities when asked why she keeps playing a monarch, from "Camelot," "The Princess Diaries" to "Shrek," where she voices Queen Lillian. "I think I'm just lucky," she commented, laughing. "If you played one, they think, oh, we'll get her again. It might be my British accent."



JULIE ANDREWS

Julie, made a Dame of the British Empire in 1999, was asked to comment on a news photo showing a woman curtsying so low before the Queen during the latter's recent visit to Maryland. "Maybe this lady's knees deserted her," joked the cherished Maria von Trapp of our childhood. "But one should acknowledge the queen—one should curtsy if one's legs allow that. If not, she will understand if you bow. The degree in curtsy is up to you. I tried to make it look as graceful and gracious as I possibly could because it's a great honor to meet Her Majesty."

Kids update

When requested to give an update on the kids in her two most popular movies, "The Sound of Music" and "Mary Poppins," Julie revealed, "I have sad news about one of the kids in 'Mary Poppins.' The actor (Matthew Garber) who played the little boy died. I do not know how or what happened but I heard with great regret that he is not with us. I know the girl (**Karen Dotrice**) very well. She's now a wonderful woman with children all her own. The children from 'The Sound of Music' are all married. We do get together occasionally, especially whenever the film has a big anniversary or some celebration in connection with the film. We have stayed friends all these years."

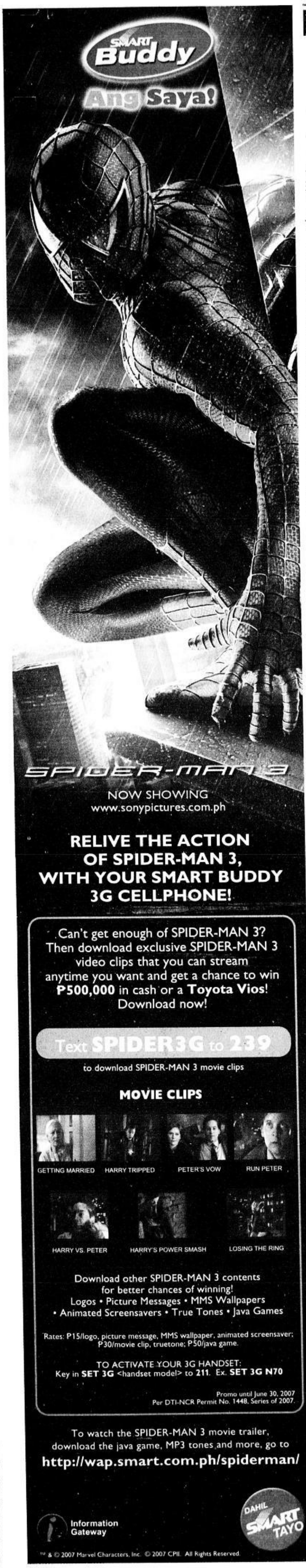
The stage veteran shared one of her funniest moments: "There are so many funny ones. In 'Camelot,' we had a big English sheepdog. He was horribly neurotic and unfortunately, every time he got onstage, he was so nervous and neurotic that he would dump all over the stage (laughter). You can imagine—if you were in 'Camelot,' you have long sleeves, trains and wimples. It can get pretty messy if you were not careful. One day, when the dog's dump was all over the stage, the gentlemen wrapped their sleeves around their arms and got off the stage. I was left on the stage. I began to sing, 'Tra la!/It's May!/The lusty month of May!/That lovely month when ev'ryone goes/Blissfully astray.' There I was swinging gaily. I tried so hard to keep a straight face but I couldn't."

Different voice

The actress, whose botched throat surgery in 1998 cost us that familiar crystalline, perfectly pitched voice, sang those lyrics—to our delight. "I've sung-spoken a couple of songs on a very, very low key," she explained. "You could call them little ditties. I miss singing very much, more than I can possibly explain. But my lovely daughter who I write books with said, 'Mum, now that you're writing, you've found a different way of using your voice.' Thank God what happened was toward the end of my career."

On her husband, **Blake Edwards**, director of the acclaimed "Pink Panther" movie series and Bo Derek's "10": "There isn't a day when I don't say, Blake, please put your thoughts, feelings and reminiscences in print because they're a piece of Hollywood history. He's a wonderful director. As soon as I'm done with my biography, I am going to nag him until he at least puts his thoughts into a tape recorder."

E-mail the columnist at rvnepales_5585@yahoo.com and read his blog, "The Nepales Report," on www.inquirerbloggers.net/nepalesreport.



PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

LIVING Stars

Editor Emmie G. Velarde

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HOME BODY

Pure expressions

Casita de mis sueños, she calls it. Little house of my dreams.

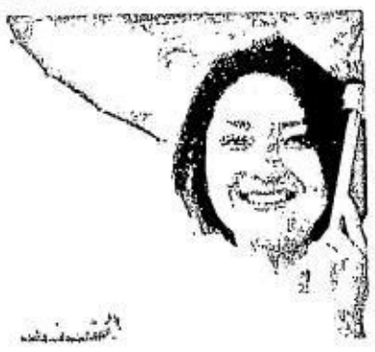
A few years ago, Timmy Cruz—actress, recording artist, businesswoman—met a person who put off his dreams of traveling until he got too sick to act on those dreams.

"I can't do that," she told herself. "I should live my dreams now."

She found this property and saw something that no one else did.

"I first saw it in a vision. I understand why other people wondered why I liked it," Timmy recalls now. "I

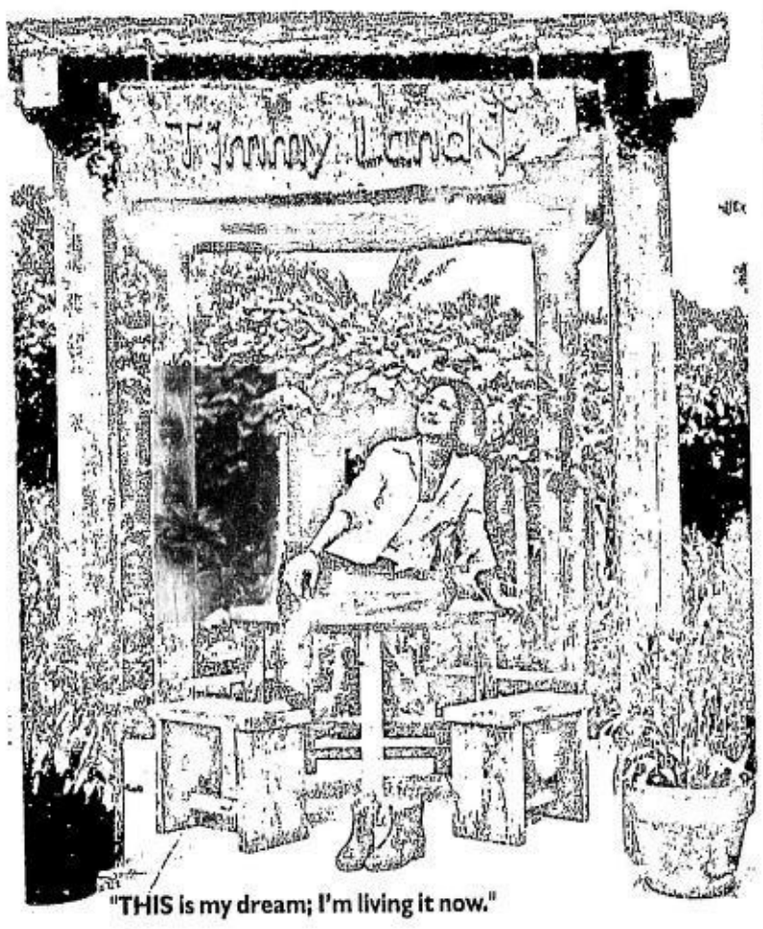
PURE/ G4



SINGER Timmy Cruz has created corners of calm in her Tagaytay home.

PHOTOS BY JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

SHE'S a "sky person." Vast and blue are her requirements.



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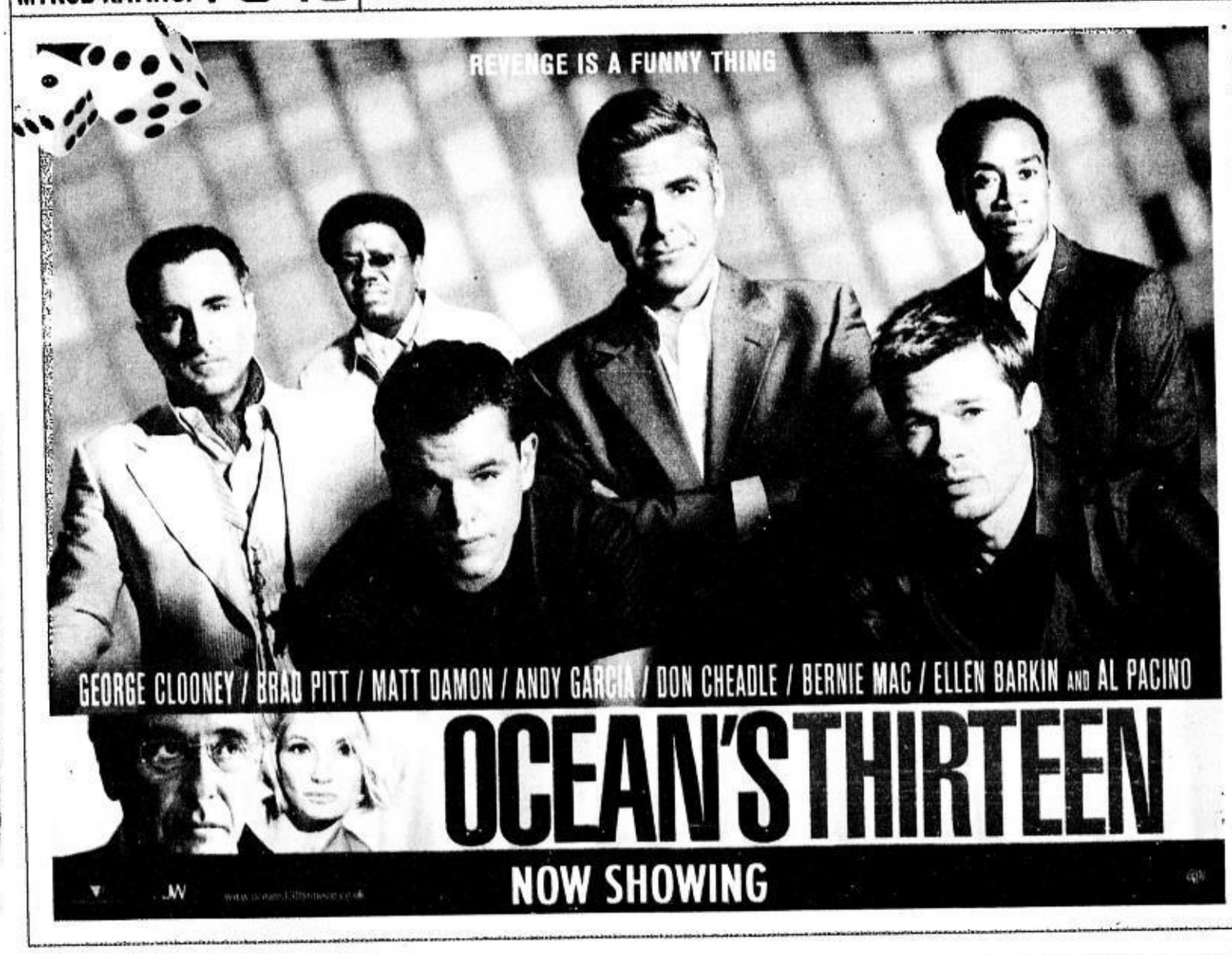
MTRCB RATING: PG-13 | Children below 13 years old should be accompanied by a parent or adult.



ROBINSONS MOVIEWORLD CINEMAS MOVIE GUIDE

www.robinsonsmovieworld.com

MOVIES/SCHEDULES/PRICES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

GALLERIA

Ticket Price THX: P187

1 OCEAN'S 13 • THX
1:15 4:00 6:45 9:30

2 OCEAN'S 13
11:00 1:45 4:30 7:15 10:00

3 PIRATES of the CARIBBEAN 3
12:30 3:40 6:50 10.00

4 BORDERTOWN
12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00

5 MEET the ROBINSONS
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50

6 MR. BEAN'S HOLIDAY
12:30 2:20 4:10 6:00 7:50 9:40

7 SILIP
12:20 2:45 5:10 7:35 10:00

8 indieSine: DAAN PATUNGONG KALIMUGTONG
1:30 3:15 5:00 6:45 8:30

9 SHREK 3
1:10 3:20 5:30 7:40 9:50

10 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN?
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50

NOW SHOWING

Cris Pablo's
METLOGS!

Starring: CHOCOLEYT

3 young men leave their provinces to try their luck in Metro Manila. They come under the care of Vitaliah, an aging gay full of wit and wisdom. Metlogs is a fun film about young men and their survival tactics for the harsh and expensive urban lives they lead.

MAY 30 to JUNE 05
Robinsons Movieworld GALLERIA
MTRCB Rating: PG13

ERMITA

1 OCEAN'S THIRTEEN
12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00

2 SHREK 3 12:45 3:00 5:15
MR. BEAN'S HOLIDAY 7:30 10:00

3 PIRATES of the CARIBBEAN 3
11:15 2:50 6:25 10:00

4 SILIP
12:35 3:00 5:25 7:50 10:00

5 MEET the ROBINSONS
12:00 2 00 4:00 6:00 8:00 10:00

6 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN?
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 10:00

7 BORDERTOWN
12:35 3:00 5:25 7:50 10:00

METRO EAST

Ticket Price: P100 / P110

1 SHREK 3
12:50 2:50 4:50 6:50 9:00

2 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN?
1:15 3:50 6:25 9:00

3 MEET the ROBINSONS
12:05 2:15 4:25 6:35 9:00

4 BORDERTOWN
1:15 3:50 6:25 9:00

5 SILIP
12:05 2:15 4:25 6:35 9:00

6 OCEAN'S 13
12:30 3:20 6:10 9:00

7 PIRATES of the CARIBBEAN 3
11:30 2.40 5:50 9.00

8 MR. BEAN'S HOLIDAY
12:40 2:40 4:50 6:50 9:00

Get FREE
Walt Disney's MEET THE ROBINSONS
150-piece puzzle set
for a minimum of four (4)
MEET the ROBINSONS movie tickets
at Robinsons Movieworld
GALLERIA & METRO EAST
SHOWING on JUNE 06
at Robinsons Movieworld

NOVALICHES

Ticket Price: P91

1 OCEAN'S 13
2 PIRATES of the CARIBBEAN 3
3 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN?
4 SILIP
5 MR. BEAN'S HOLIDAY
6 MEET the ROBINSONS

PIONEER

Ticket Price: P100

1 BORDERTOWN
12:50 3:20 5:50 8:20

2 OCEAN'S 13
12:10 2:55 5:40 8:25

3 MEET the ROBINSONS
1:40 4:00 6:20 8:40

4 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN?
1:40 4:00 6:20 8:40

STA. ROSA

Ticket Price: P80
(049) 837-0907

1 PIRATES of the CARIBBEAN 3
2 OCEAN'S 13
3 MEET the ROBINSONS
4 SILIP
5 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN?

LIPA

Ticket Price: P80
(043) 312-5870

1 PIRATES of the CARIBBEAN 3
2 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN?
3 MEET the ROBINSONS
4 SILIP
5 LUCKY YOU

DASMARIÑAS

Ticket Price: P80
(046) 416-4332

1 28 WEEKS LATER
2 MEET the ROBINSONS
3 SILIP
4 OCEAN'S 13
5 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN?

ANGELES

(045) 892-2348

1 OCEAN'S 13
2 MEET the ROBINSONS
3 SILIP
4 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN?

IMUS

Ticket Price: P100
(046) 875-3838
(046) 471-8188

1 OCEAN'S 13
2 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN?
3 PIRATES of the CARIBBEAN 3
4 MEET the ROBINSONS
5 SILIP
6 MR. BEAN'S HOLIDAY

STARMILLS

(045) 875-1927

1 MEET the ROBINSONS
2 PIRATES of the CARIBBEAN 3
3 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN?
4 SILIP
5 OCEAN'S 13
6 MR. BEAN'S HOLIDAY

BACOLOD

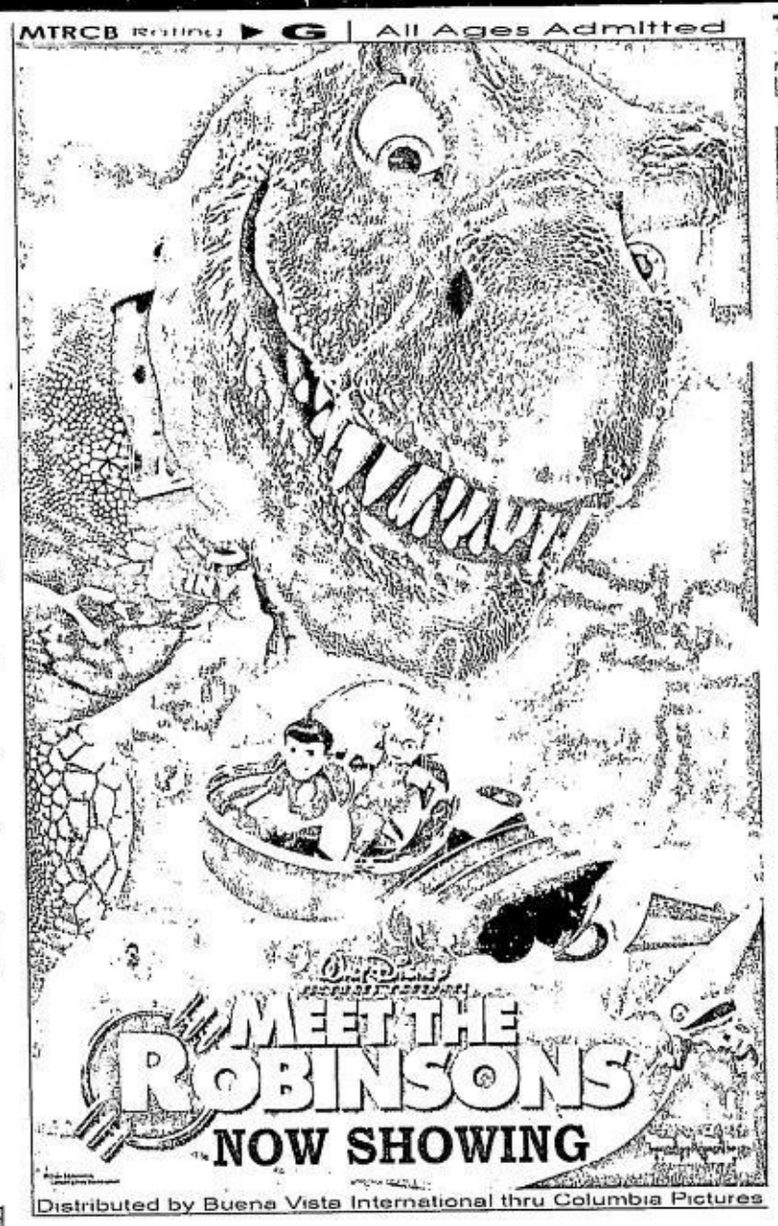
Ticket Price: P70
(034) 441-0459

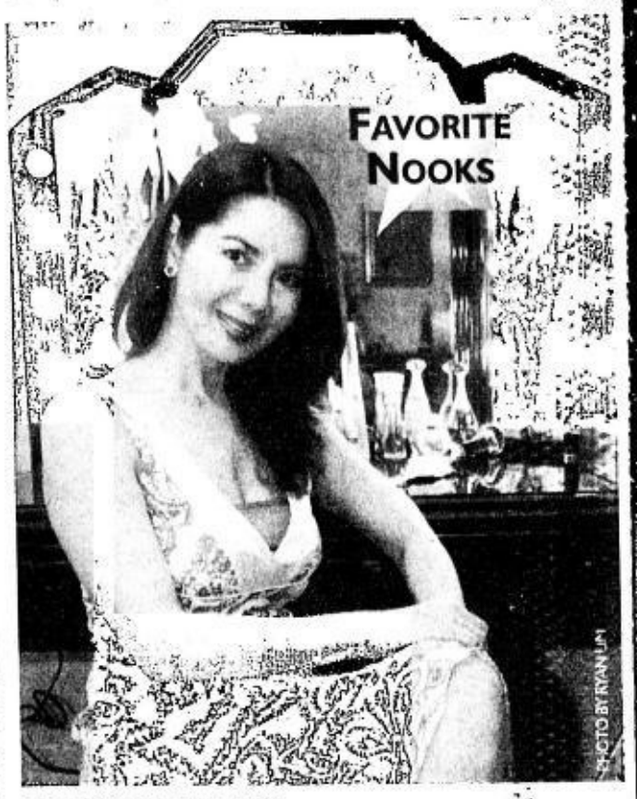
1 OCEAN'S 13
2 MEET the ROBINSONS
3 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN?
4 RESERVE
5 PIRATES of the CARIBBEAN 3
6 SILIP

ILOILO

Ticket Price: P70.50
(033) 338-8070

1 PIRATES of the CARIBBEAN 3
2 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN?
3 MEET the ROBINSONS
4 OCEAN'S 13
5 MR. BEAN'S HOLIDAY
6 FIREHOUSE DOG





CARMI MARTIN

MY FAVORITE corner in my house is the bedroom. I do everything here. I pray in the bathroom. I do computer work in the mini-office (at the extension). I often watch TV and read books in bed—that's how I unwind. I got this vanity dresser in a furniture store in the 1980s. I enjoy doing my makeup here because I feel like a star in front of my dresser, with its bright lights. I found the escritoire (with the roll-top cover) in an antique shop in Makati. I've also displayed paintings by Gerry Ingco and HR Ocampo here. All the things I love are in this room.

Bayani San Diego Jr.

SHOWING NOW!!!!!

Mes de Guzman's

ANG DAAN PATUNGONG KALIMUGTONG

ONE OF THE MOST ACCLAIMED DIGITAL FILMS!

A poignant tale about two siblings in Benguet and their family's struggle to survive amidst adversity

Cinemanila Int'l Film Fest
San Sebastian Int'l Film Fest
Winner of 2 Urian Awards!

DON'T FAIL TO WATCH THIS HIGHLY-ACCLAIMED FILM!

indieSine

ONLY AT INDIESINE, Robinsons Galleria!

BRAD Pitt, R, and Angelina Jolie

TARA REID

'Ocean's Thirteen' preem in LA, June 5

MATT Damon and his wife Luciana REUTERS

AMERICAN MODEL Cindy Crawford AFP

ELLEN BARKIN

GEORGE CLOONEY

Araneta Center
aranetacenter.net

Gateway MALL FarmersPlaza

BUY YOUR TICKETS IN ADVANCE!

Watch Fantastic 4 at Gateway Cineplex 10 with full stadium seating for completely unobstructed views

OPENS JUNE 13

www.gatewaycineplex10.com

Regular Cinemas P 170 / Platinum Cinema P 350/300 | MTRCB Rating: PG 13

For reservations, call 911-5555 or log on to ticketnet.com.ph & aranetacenter.net

Gateway CinePlex*10

WALL TO WALL SCREEN

EXPERIENCE THE DIFFERENCE

OCEAN'S 13	BORDERTOWN	SILIP	Globe PLATINUM CINEMA
12:00 / 2:30 / 5:00 / 7:30 / 10:00	2:00 / 4:30 / 7:00 / 9:30	12:20 / 2:40 / 5:00 / 7:20 / 9:40	
MEET THE ROBINSONS	PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN 3	MR BEAN'S HOLIDAY	
11:40 / 2:00 / 4:20 / 6:40 / 9:00	12:00 / 3:20 / 6:40 / 10:00	1:50 / 3:50 / 5:50 / 7:50 / 9:50	
ZODIAC	PAANO KITA IIBIGIN	SHREK 3	OCEAN'S 13
12:10 / 3:20 / 6:30 / 9:40	12:10 / 2:35 / 5:00 / 7:25 / 9:50	1:00 / 3:00 / 5:00 / 7:00 / 9:00	1:30 / 4:00 / 6:30 / 9:00

Gateway MALL 5

1	OCEAN'S 13 12:45 / 3:15 / 5:45 / 8:15	2	SPIDERMAN 3 12:30 / 3:10 / 5:50 / 8:30	3	PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN 3 1:20 / 4:40 / 8:00
4	SILIP 12:10 R3 / 1:30 / 3:50 / 6:10 / 8:30	5	PAANO KITA IIBIGIN 12:15 R5 / 1:20 / 3:45 / 6:10 / 8:35		

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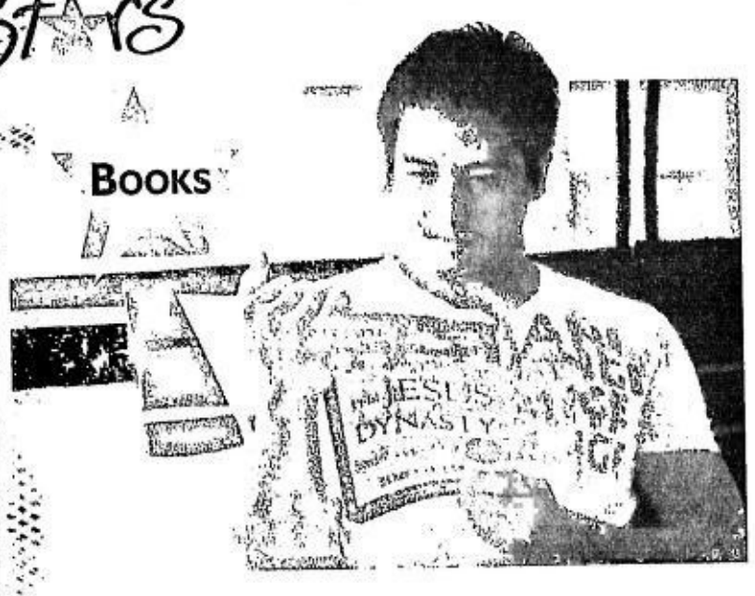
gateway to the good life 2

Win P500,000 Shopping Credits at Gateway

Ongoing until June 30 2007

See posters and flyers for details
Per DTI-NCR permit no. A3-0326 series of 2007

BOOKS



ALFRED VARGAS

I am currently reading "The Jesus Dynasty" by Biblical scholar Dr. James D. Tabor. It looks into the facts and recent archeological discoveries about the historical Jesus and His family. It shows a facet of Jesus that we don't traditionally read about. I highly recommend it to everybody. Now I can look at Jesus as an actual historical figure. On a more personal level, it allowed me to regard Jesus like a human being whom I could idolize, like Michael Jordan or Tiger Woods—without forgetting that He's the Son of God, of course. *Bayani San Diego Jr.*

MTRCB RATING ▶ R-13 | STRICTLY FOR 13 YEARS OF AGE AND UP.

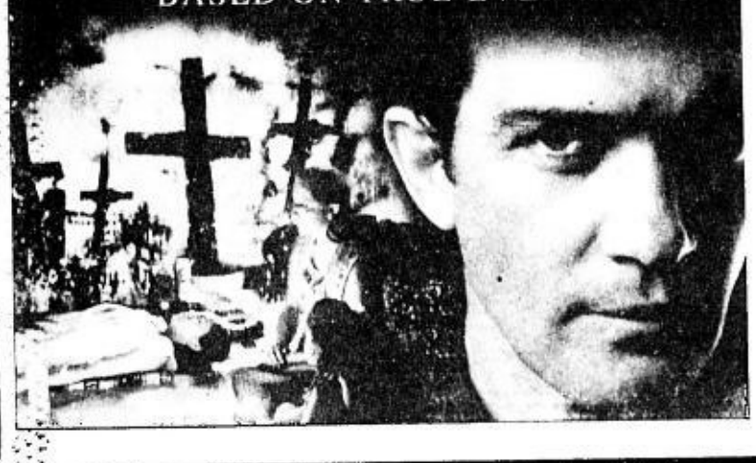
NOW SHOWING

JENNIFER LOPEZ ANTONIO BANDERAS

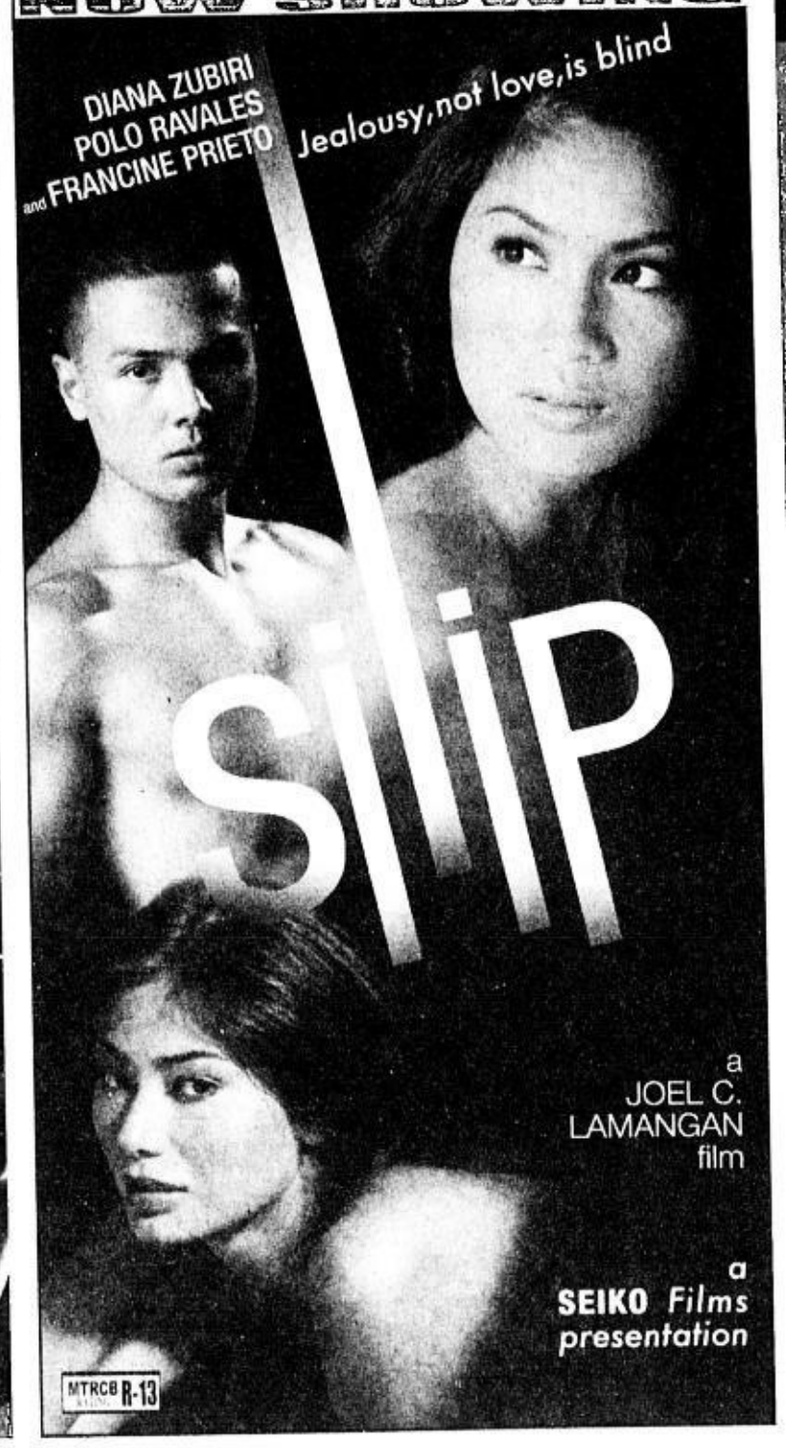
BETWEEN HEAVEN AND HELL LIES A PLACE WHERE EVEN ANGELS FEAR TO THREAD

BORDERTOWN

BASED ON TRUE EVENTS.



FLASH REPORT: WILL BE AVAILABLE IN SELECTED SM THEATERS!!!
BASED ON A TRUE STORY
NOW SHOWING



SHANG CINEPLEX

1 OCEANS'S 13 MTRCB: PG-13 1:00, 4:00, 7:00, 10:00
2 MEET THE ROBINSONS MTRCB: GP 12:30, 2:45, 5:00, 7:15, 9:30
3 FRENCH FILM FEST SUBJECT TO MTRCB RATINGS 1:00, 4:00, 6:00, 8:30
4 OCEAN'S 13 MTRCB: PG-13 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, 9:30

PREMIERE THEATRE: MR. BEAN'S HOLIDAY (GP) 1:25, 3:30, 8:35 PIRATES 3 (GP) 7:40

Movies and schedules are subject to change without prior notice

Catch the Cineplex Special

"FANTASTIC FOUR" TICKETS NOW AVAILABLE!!!
Showing on June 13, 2007 (Wednesday)
Call 633-2227 or 633-7851 loc. 171/ 170 for more details

Alliance Fr. | Shangri-la Plaza

12th French Film Festival
June 8 - 17, 2007
Shang Cineplex Cinema 3

June 8 (Friday)
Perfume 1:00 pm
Arthur and the Invisibles 4:00 pm
The Ax 6:00 pm
Gamblers 8:30 pm

June 9 (Saturday)
Arthur and the Invisibles 1:00 pm
Le Petit Lieutenant 3:30 pm
March of the Penguins 6:00 pm
Brodeuses 8:30 pm

June 10 (Sunday)
March Of the Penguins 1:00 pm
Not Here to be Loved 3:30 pm
Perfume 6:00 pm
The Ax 9:00 pm

June 11 (Monday)
Brodeuses 1:00 pm
Not Here to be Loved 3:30 pm
The Ax 6:00 pm
March of the Penguins 8:30 pm

June 12 (Tuesday)
(Tribute to Philippine Cinema)
Putot & Manoro 1:00 pm
Kaleido 3:30 pm
Masahista 6:00 pm
Masahista 8:30 pm

June 13 (Wednesday)
The Ax 1:00 pm
Gamblers 3:30 pm
Brodeuses 6:00 pm
Arthur and the Invisibles 8:30 pm

June 14 (Thursday)
March of the Penguins 1:00 pm
The Ax 3:30 pm
Gamblers 6:00 pm
Fair Play 8:30 pm

June 15 (Friday)
Not Here to be Loved 1:00 pm
Brodeuses 3:30 pm
Arthur and the Invisibles 6:00 pm
Perfume 8:30 pm

June 16 (Saturday)
The Ax 1:00 pm
Perfume 3:30 pm
Fair Play 6:30 pm
Gamblers 8:30 pm

June 17 (Sunday)
Arthur and the Invisibles 1:00 pm
Les Petit Lieutenant 3:30 pm
Not Here to be Loved 6:00 pm
March of the Penguins 8:30 pm

FREE ADMISSION
Seats on a first come first served basis

Movies and schedules are subject to change without prior notice.
Call 633-2227 for more inquiries.

glorietta | GREENBELT | ALABANG TOWN | AYALA CENTER CEBU | MARKET! MARKET! | Ayala Malls Livelihood

AT THE CINEMAS
Reserve your tickets by texting SURESEATS GB3 or SURESEATS G4 to 2333 (Globe) or 211 (Smart) or log on to www.sureseats.com for web reservations.
Movie schedules may change without prior notice. For verification please call 729 7777
THX

G1 GLORIETTA 1	1 PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN: AT WORLD'S END	2 OCEAN'S 13	3 SILIP	4 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN
G4 GLORIETTA 4	1 MEET THE ROBINSONS	2 PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN: AT WORLD'S END	3 THX OCEAN'S 13 GUARANTEED SEATS	
	4 BORDERTOWN	5 SHREK 3	6 OCEAN'S 13	7 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN
GB1 GREENBELT 1	1 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN	2 OCEAN'S 13		
GB3 GREENBELT 3	1 THX PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN: AT WORLD'S END GUARANTEED SEATS	2 THX OCEAN'S 13 GUARANTEED SEATS		
	3 MEET THE ROBINSONS GUARANTEED SEATS	4 BORDERTOWN GUARANTEED SEATS	5 OCEAN'S 13 GUARANTEED SEATS	
ATC ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1 THX OCEAN'S 13 GUARANTEED SEATS	2 PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN: AT WORLD'S END		
	3 MEET THE ROBINSONS	4 BORDERTOWN	5 OCEAN'S 13	
ACC AYALA CENTER CEBU	1 OCEAN'S 13	2 28 WEEKS LATER	3 MEET THE ROBINSONS	4 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN
M2 MARKET! MARKET!	1 OCEAN'S 13	2 MEET THE ROBINSONS		
	3 BORDERTOWN	4 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN	5 SILIP	

Ayala CINEMAS

BUY YOUR TICKETS NOW!
Visit our cinema ticket booths at:
- GLORIETTA 4
- GREENBELT 3
- ALABANG TOWN CENTER
- MARKET! MARKET!
- TRINOMA
- AYALA CENTER CEBU

Or log on to www.sureseats.com for web reservations

OPENS JUNE 13 AT AYALA MALLS CINEMAS

MTRCB Rating: General Audience (G)

FANTASTIC 4 RISE OF THE SILVER SURFER

MARVEL | glorietta | GREENBELT | ALABANG TOWN | MARKET! MARKET! | TriNoma | AYALA CENTER CEBU

At the Activity Center

Customer Service text hotline: 0917 6095900
Customer Service Numbers: Glorietta - 752 7272; from 10am to 9pm; Greenbelt - 757 4853; from 11am to 9pm; Alabang Town Center - 842 2782; from 10am to 8pm; Ayala Center Cebu - (032) 231 5342 loc 324; Market! Market! - 886 7519

GLORIETTA	ALABANG TOWN CENTER
Nestle's Koko Krunch Event June 9 & 10, 2007	Fitness at the Town: Free well-being & invigorating health classes at Cortes De Las Palmas & Town Plaza June 1 to 13, 2007
AYALA CENTER CEBU	MARKET! MARKET!
Maria Flordeluna Mall Tour June 15, 2007	Bazaar! Bazaar! Men's Fair June 4 to 15, 2007

GREENBELT
Mazda Car Exhibit
June 7 to 9, 2007 at GB.1 Lobby

Greenbelt Onstage
ONSTAGE - The perfect spot for concerts, stage plays & coporate events is now accepting bookings for May to July 2007
For bookings, pls. call 752-7862 or 757-3861

Ayala MUSEUM
Embroidered Mutliples: 18th - 19th Century Philippine Costume fr. The Museum Volkenkunde (National Museum of Ethnology), The Netherlands June 4 to July 1, 2007
For more info, pls. call 757-7117 to 21 loc. 14 or email museum_inquiry@ayalamuseum.org

Ayala Malls

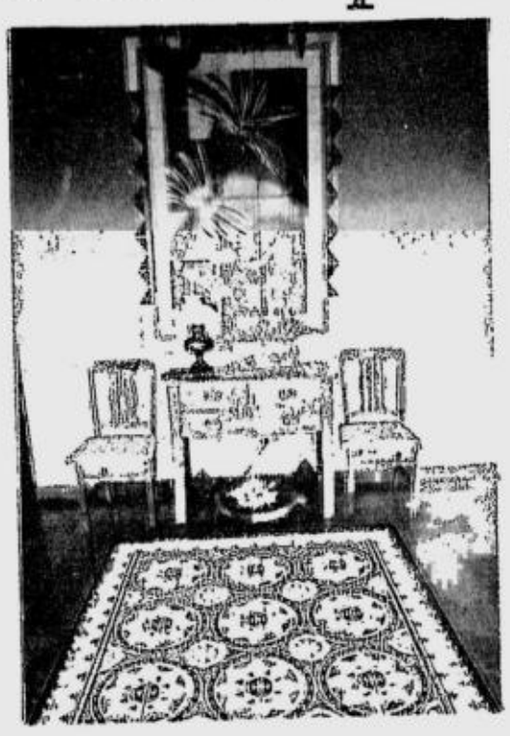
MEN'S FAIR
JUNE 4-14, 2007
MARKET! MARKET! ACTIVITY CENTER

A MAN-TASTIC SHOWCASE OF APPAREL, SPORTS GEAR, GADGETS AND MORE – ALL FOR MEN!

MARKET! MARKET! The fun is in the finds

Pure expressions

From page G1



THIS high chair, above, goes everywhere with her, Timmy says. Mom bought it for her when she was 5. At left, a rendition in decorative tiles of one of Timmy's favorite paintings.

thought it was perfect—3,000 square meters of gently rolling grounds, rich soil ..."

Vast blue sky.

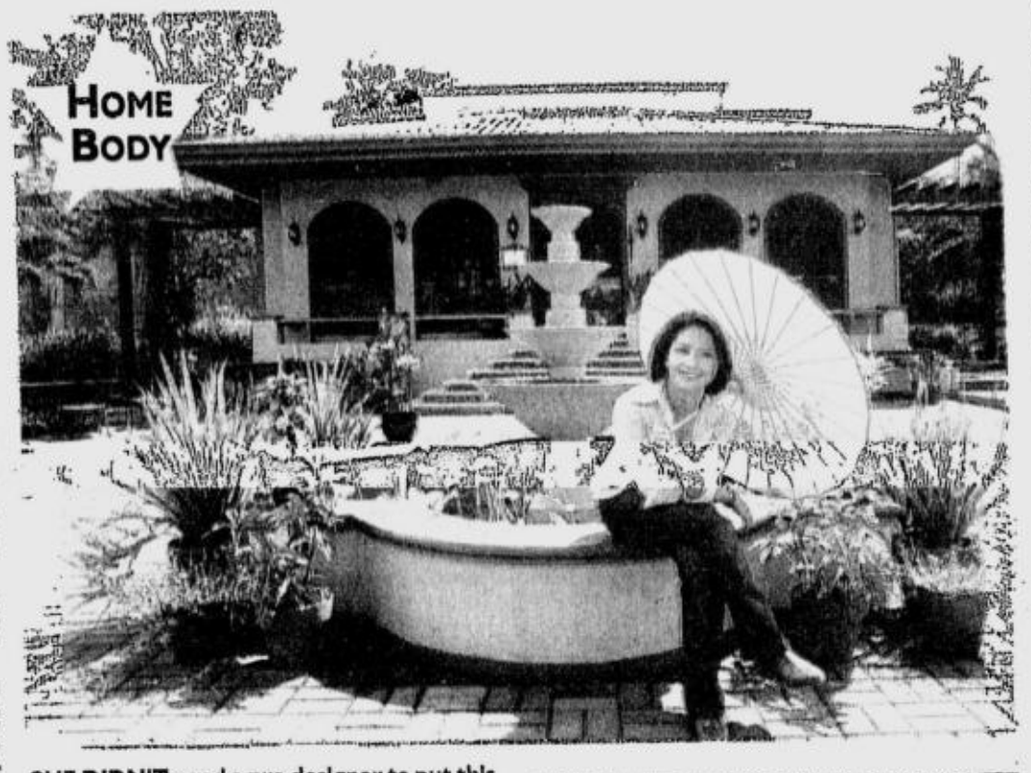
"I am a sky person," she explains, rather unnecessarily: She walks across the sprawling garden with her head tilted up, smiling as she takes in the crisp, cool Tagaytay air. It is a clear day, and Inquirer Entertainment is happy to be visiting.

Three years ago, she was content with only the little cottage near the gate, the rest of the property just a cheerful spread of bromeliads, peanut grass, palm trees ("rescued" from a gasoline station that was folding up and poised to cut them down) and Freeda. Short for "freedom," Timmy says.

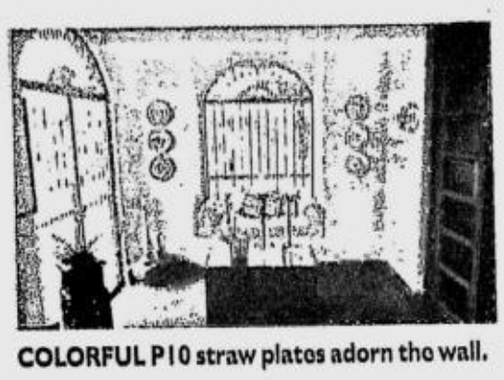
Freeda is a *dapdap* tree that used to tower over the grounds. Typhoon "Milenyo" forced her down, on her side, and still she flourished.

From a few feet away, Freeda looks like a giant lizard, friendly and noble, adorned with crowns of bromeliads and a sprightly tail of her own leaves.

But to backtrack ... several good business deals (Timmy manages her family's property leasing company in Ermita, Manila) enabled the actress/singer to raise money for the *casita* in her mind. So her "little house," two years old now, stands at the far end of the garden—with just enough room for a patch of cacti in the back—like a serene *señorita*.



SHE DIDN'T need a pro designer to put this together. "I just read a lot of books."



COLORFUL P10 straw plates adorn the wall.

Paintings by Inday Cadapan

True, it is not big at all, just well-planned—every bricked and Machuca tile square foot of it.

The light-suffused veranda is enclosed in wood-framed screen, no glass. So rain comes in, almost always.

"That's part of the deal," Timmy laughs. And she means yes, that's fine with her, even if some of her favorite things are out there.

Overall, the theme is Mexican. But, she insists, most of the furniture and decor are Philippine. "The old things, I acquired through the years. I didn't even get too much stuff from the ancestral home, except my kiddie high chair." She didn't need an architect or a designer. "I researched and dressed up the *casita* myself."

Hour of nectar

It is a house of cozy corners, each one lending itself to a calming, exquisite snapshot. "I call them my *amrit vela* nooks," she says.

Literally, that means "hour of nectar," a Hindi phrase that is also the term for one of Timmy's newfound routines, early morning meditation. "At 4 a.m., before the birds start flying about, before anything stirs, I sit in silence for about an hour just taking in the purity of the atmosphere," she says. "Silence is my oxygen. This is such a sweet place."

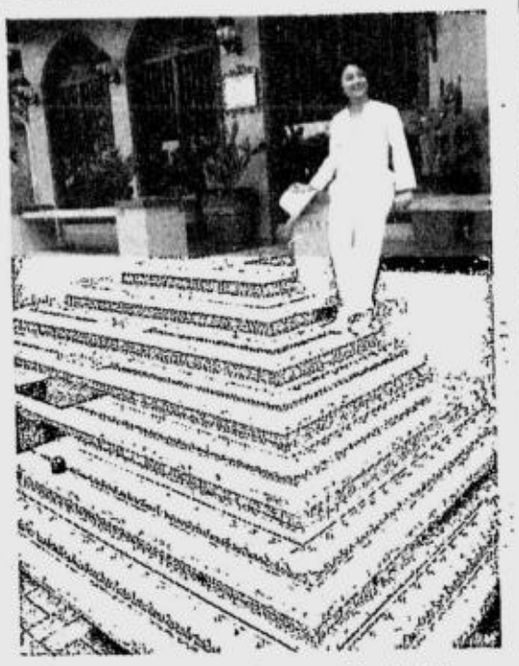
Did she say birds? "Yes, I get a lot here—kingfishers, sparrows, a bigger species that looks like a chicken and which flies very low. There were more birds when Freeda was upright."

(To underscore her new lifestyle, Timmy is co-hosting an experiential entertainment event promoting silence and change, titled "Time and Transformation," on June 18, at the Araneta Coliseum.)

Last night there was a full moon, she offers, turning a bit dreamy. "I sat out in the garden for a long time."

Emmie G. Velarde

SHE has turned vegan, too, and learned to cook for herself and occasional guests.



STEPS leading to the door are lined with Machuca tiles in cheery antique designs.

Take the first line of defense against violence and abuse.

The Women's desk Self-Defense Clinic

If you are a Slimmers World member, you and your friend may join any of the FREE self-defense lessons happening in the following venues:

June 9 — SLIMMERS WORLD 9-10:30am — Trafalgar, Pasay Road, Legaspi, Alabang

June 16 — SLIMMERS WORLD 9-10:30am — Pasig, Greenhills, MegaMall

June 23 — SLIMMERS WORLD 9-10:30am — Adriatico, Binondo, SM City North Edsa, Caloocan

stop the abuse. draw the LINE

It is your right to protect yourself from abuse.

Now is the time to Draw the Line.

To report cases of abuse or to find out more about the Draw The Line campaign, call the Women's Desk Hotline 926-6598.

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